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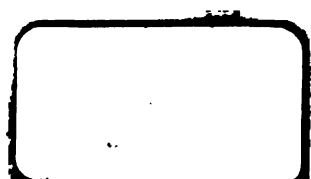
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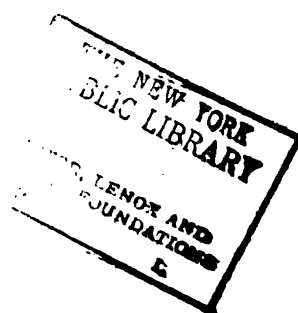
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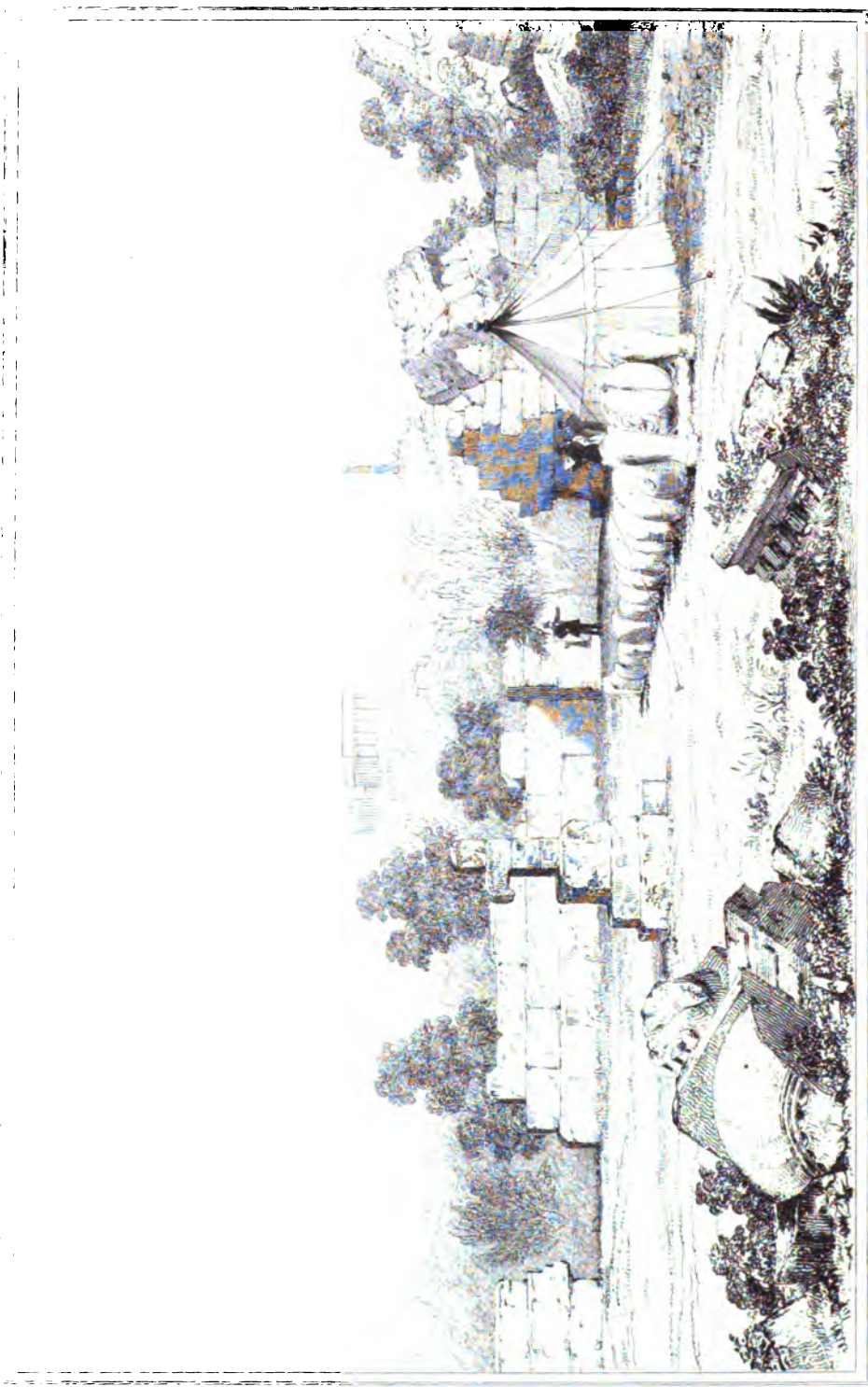
when we were

in the city of Messina

in the

AN AUTUMN IN SICILY.





These I'll & did them in March by the back of the river.

March 1st. I went to the river and saw the Indians. They were very friendly and gave me some food. I stayed with them for a few days and then went back to the river.

AN AUTUMN IN SICILY,
BEING
AN ACCOUNT
OF
THE PRINCIPAL REMAINS OF ANTIQUITY
EXISTING IN THAT ISLAND,
WITH
SHORT SKETCHES
OF
ITS ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY.

With a Map and Illustrations.

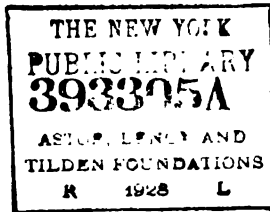
BY
THE MARQUIS OF ORMONDE.

DUBLIN:
HODGES AND SMITH, GRAFTON-STREET,
BOOKSELLERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

MDCCCL.

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Printed at the University Press,
BY M. H. GILL.

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TO
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
THE QUEEN,
AND
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE ALBERT,
ON THE AUSPICIOUS OCCASION OF
HER MAJESTY'S AND HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S
FIRST VISIT TO IRELAND,
THIS VOLUME IS,
BY THE SPECIAL PERMISSION OF
HER MAJESTY AND HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS,
MOST DUTIFULLY DEDICATED,
BY HER MAJESTY'S AND HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S
MOST DEVOTED AND GRATEFUL
SUBJECT AND SERVANT,

ORMONDE.

P R E F A C E.

My fellow-traveller, Mr. Odell, and I, proposed, on our return from our tour, to publish in conjunction a volume descriptive of it, of which he undertook the compilation. From various causes the work was laid aside by him, after some sheets had been struck off. In the course of last winter, when on a visit at his residence, I saw them, and thinking it a pity that the mass of notes which he had collected should, as well as the plates (the superintendence of which had originally been my share of the work), remain useless, I obtained his permission to carry off and make use of the entire of the materials, with full power to preserve, alter, and omit, as I thought proper; I undertaking all responsibility for the result, which is now, with much diffidence, presented to the public.

My object has been, while aiming at giving pleasure to the scholar and the antiquary, to supply a volume

which may be acceptable to the traveller, as containing a faithful account of the objects most worthy of notice, with such hints as to time, distance, and means of transit, as may be relied on. I have but slightly noticed the modern history, politics, and internal condition of the island, warned by the fate of so many who have thought themselves qualified by a short sojourn in any one country, to pronounce on questions involving existing interests, which can only be understood by long and continued observation.

Dublin, 1850.

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AN AUTUMN IN SICILY.

CHAPTER I.

DEPARTURE FROM NAPLES—PÆSTUM—VOYAGE TO STROMBOLI—LIPARI—
VULCANO—ARRIVAL AT MESSINA.

I MUST ever look back to the summer of 1832 as one of the pleasantest portions of my life. Young—in the enjoyment of robust health—with means sufficient for every reasonable want, and with a companion with whom I was, and had long been, on the most intimate and friendly terms, I was about to carry out the plan of a tour which had been long arranged between us. The wearisome session and endless debates on the Reform Bill, then the all-absorbing topic, were forgotten, the last shake of the hand was given, and on a fine evening towards the end of July I found myself in the Dover mail, on my way to Calais, whither my companion, with the carriage and baggage, had gone twelve hours previously. I rejoined him as speedily as the Dover mail and Dover mail-packet of those slow days admitted, and we started at once, taking the line through Belgium, which caused us some delay, as on the Prussian frontier we found a sanitary cordon established, in consequence of some cases of cholera having occurred, or been reported; and we had to put up in a small inn in the neigh-

bourhood until a certain number of days had been passed in the salubrious air of the Netherlands. The chief object which we had in view was to get to Sicily in time to make a complete tour of the island before the winter had set in ; and the time which we had previously allotted to the different interesting places on our line of road was, as far as possible, adhered to. By occasional night journeys we made up for any little liberty taken here and there, and in spite of the heat I contrived to get at Milan, Florence, and Rome, a sight, somewhat cursory no doubt,—“*guardi è passa*,”—of most of the antiquities, pictures, and curiosities. We arrived at Naples on the 20th of August, and our preparations for the voyage to Messina and subsequent journey were soon complete. The weather, however, was very unfavourable, and we were detained some days longer than we had anticipated. There was too much novelty in all around to allow time to hang heavy during the day, and at night Malibran and Lablachè rendered the theatre of San Carlo more than usually attractive. On the 31st the wind became fair, we were all ready, and in the evening took leave of the Hotel de Russie, went on board our boat, and got under way for Pæstum. The speronara, which we had selected for our conveyance, was a good-sized one, with a stout mast, large spritsail, foresail, and jib: the crew consisting of the captain and twelve men. The latter were provided with oars, and, when necessary, used them with effect, standing on a deck of short planks loosely laid down. Sufficient elevation was given to the helmsman to enable him to see over the top of an awning much like that on an English tax-cart, and placed near the stern. The interior of this

answered the purpose of a cabin, and under it we proceeded to spread our mattresses. The space was limited and the confinement somewhat irksome, as it was so low that standing upright was out of the question, and sitting on anything reasonably high not very easy. A great traffic is carried on throughout the Mediterranean in this description of craft, and to the generally peaceful character of the inland sea, further security is added by the great caution usually evinced by the crews who navigate them. The wind fell at sunset and our men were obliged to take to their oars. The twilight soon failed us, and the winding shores of the beautiful bay could no longer be traced but by the gradually receding lights that glimmered at intervals along the water's edge.

September 1.—We made little progress during the night, and when the day broke were still within a short distance of the precipice that forms the eastern extremity of Capri, on the summit of which may yet be seen the ruins of one of the twelve palaces erected on the island by Tiberius. A more splendid situation could not possibly be selected; and, however low the Emperor may have been sunk in detestable and revolting debauchery, he clearly had an eye for the appreciation of inanimate beauty. The channel between this and the lofty headland called Punta della Campanella is about two miles wide. On the latter once stood a temple dedicated to Minerva, said to have been founded by Ulysses, but of which no vestiges now remain.

The scenery from thence along the coast to Salerno is perhaps, finer than any on the Bay of Naples. It presents a succession of rugged pointed hills, skirted seawards by preci-

pices, clinging, as it were, to the face of which, are perched towns, that look as if a breeze would shake them into the blue waves below. Amongst these is Amalfi, celebrated as being the place where, in the year 1137, the Pandects of Justinian were discovered, the two volumes forming the original copy being now in the Laurentian library at Florence. Amalfi also boasts, if popular report is to be credited, possession of the body of St. Andrew, of Scotland, brought thither by Cardinal Capuano in 1208, and deposited in a tomb under the choir of the cathedral. A few miles to the west is Positano, the birth-place of Flavio Gioja, the reputed inventor of the mariner's compass.

The land breeze prevailed during the day, and we did not approach the shore until evening. It was necessary, before proceeding to our destination, to land at Agropoli, some miles beyond Pæstum, to obtain pratique, the Neapolitan government having established a set of sanitary regulations, which, however necessary in Italian eyes, are unquestionably most vexatious, if not nugatory. What with bills of health, examinations, and duties, it seems as if the government were bent on smothering the little trade that remains to them, by the multitude of decrees for regulating it. Between six and seven o'clock we reached the miserable village, supposed to occupy the site of the acropolis of Pæstum; and after an hour spent in ascertaining that we had not brought the cholera from Naples, were told that we were at liberty to embark again. The gravity of the "sanita" officials had been much disturbed during this important investigation by a poodle belonging to us, which persisted in taking exercise

on shore without waiting for the assurance that he was not infected.

By the agreement with our skipper, made before starting, the entire vessel was to be at our disposal, both as to capacity and destination. The captain had early given us proof of bad faith, by taking in cargo, thinking it likely that we should not detect him; and had he been moderate, he would probably have succeeded. It was our intention now to get to Pæstum at once, in order to save time the next day; but on explaining this he objected again, nor was it until we convinced him that we were able to procure another conveyance that he yielded. We anchored as near the temples as was practicable, and, after a short run on shore, returned on board to sleep.

September 2.—As soon as it was light, we breakfasted, landed, and pursued our way to the temples, through a thicket of myrtle and arbutus. The situation is solitary, the only habitations being a few miserable hovels, tenanted by emaciated wretches, whose livid countenances bore ample testimony to the baneful influence of the atmosphere in which they exist. Their appearance would alone account for Pæstum having become so completely deserted. The want of a harbour furnishes an additional reason. But there can be little doubt of the importance to which, at some distant period, it must have attained; for, independently of its having given name to the present Gulf of Salerno, few cities have left such splendid monuments of their architectural skill and magnificence. History, however, is nearly silent regarding it; and but for the roses which bloomed twice every year, scarce a written memorial of its existence would have

remained; and that existence indeed was only ascertained by the discovery, comparatively recent, of the ruins by a wandering artist in search, like ourselves, of the picturesque.

At a time when Rome consisted of but a few huts on the Palatine Hill, these buildings stood much as we now see them; and all that is really known regarding them is, that they were erected at a period beyond the reach of any existing records. Perhaps it is to the free scope thus given to speculation and romance that these simple and majestic memorials of a former age are indebted for much of the charm which surrounds them, as curiosity usually gains strength in proportion as the prospect of arriving at any certainty becomes faint. They are situated on an extensive plain, bounded on one hand by the sea, and on the other by a range of mountains, above which towers Mount Alburnus. The line occupied by them would form the eastern side of a street intersecting the city in its greatest breadth. Approaching from the northern gate, the first which attracts attention is that called the Temple of Ceres, but in style of architecture, as well as in dimensions, it is inferior to the others. Like all the Doric temples of Magna Græcia and Sicily, the columns rise without bases from the platform on which they stand, and diminish about one-fourth in diameter as they ascend. Of these, there are six at each end, and thirteen at each side, those at the angles included each way. The architrave is entire, but the lateral frieze is gone. The eastern pediment has suffered considerably, but that at the other end is almost perfect. The triglyphs seem to be of a softer stone than the rest, and the channels, except here and there one, are oblite-

rated. Of the Cella nothing remains but a few shattered columns, and confused heaps of stones.*

At some distance to the south stands the Temple of Neptune, a name, I believe, merely conventional, and originating in the ancient name of the city, Poseidonia.

This very striking monument of former days is fortunately the most perfect, as it is the most imposing of the three. It is elevated on a platform of three degrees or steps, has six columns at each end, and fourteen at each side. Those of the peristyle are unusually massive in their proportions, their height equalling only four diameters and a quarter. The projection of the ovolo and abacus is very great, and the flutings, of which there are twenty-four, very sharp. The architrave and frieze are heavy, and the cornice prominent, but the general effect is very fine and the simplicity of the design, combined with the strength and solidity of its parts, produce eminently that grandeur which, according to Aristotle, consists in magnitude and proper disposition. The pronaos and posticum of this temple were each enclosed in front by two columns and two pilasters; from the latter ran a wall carried the length of the cella. Vestiges of staircases are apparent, as in the temple of Concord at Agrigentum. Two ranges of columns run along the interior, on each of which, separated only by an architrave, is supported another row of smaller size. The effect

* The following are the dimensions of this temple:—

	Feet.	Inches.
Extreme length,	107	8
Breadth,	47	7
Circumference of columns,	13	0

Twenty flutings in each.

of this reduplication is not good. Of the lower rows, seven, the original number of columns, are standing on both sides ; of the upper, five on one side and three on the other.*

A short distance from this is the third temple, or, as it is called, *La Basilica*. It is divided in the centre by pillars, and has no vestiges of a cella, whence some say it was a court of justice, while others conjecture that it was dedicated to two deities, as the temple of Venus and Rome. Like the others, it is raised on a substructure of three very high steps, has nine columns at each end, and eighteen at either side. The columns of this temple are distinguished by a necking adorned with leaves. The architrave is entire, and some of the frieze remains, but without triglyphs or other ornaments. Most of the pillars in the interior of the edifice have fallen.†

The stone used in building these temples is extremely porous, and combines lightness with great durability. It is of a brownish-grey colour, and formed of small twigs and other vegetable matter, imbedded in a calcareous deposit from the neighbouring streams. The cavities occurring in the stone were probably the cause of the edifices having been covered

	Feet.	Inches.
* Extreme length,	196	6
Extreme breadth,	79	9
Height and breadth of degrees of platform,	1	5
Height of columns of peristyle,	29	2
Circumference of columns of peristyle, 24 flutings,	20	9
Circumference of columns of cella, 20 flutings, .	14	4½
Abacus, square,	8	7½
Height from platform to the apex of the pediment,	50	6
† Extreme length	168	6
Breadth,	80	6
Circumference of columns,	14	8
Twenty flutings.		

with a coat of stucco, of which there are still remains. The cork models sold at Naples give, from the nature of that material, an excellent idea of the actual appearance of the buildings.

The walls of the city, forming nearly a square, and in some places almost of their original height, enclose a space about three miles in circuit. They were built with great solidity, of large, squared stones, and were defended at the angles and at certain intervals by towers, some of which are nearly perfect. The eastern gate is also uninjured, and on the centre stone of the arch are sculptured some figures, but what intended to represent we could not ascertain.

Vestiges of a small amphitheatre are visible; and from the excavations which the Neapolitan government has at length caused to be made, the remains of many other temples and public buildings have been brought to light, from among the ruins of which a surprising quantity of highly sculptured friezes, fragments of Ionic and Corinthian pillars and capitals, and mutilated statues, have been dug out; the latter affording sufficient proof of their having been executed at a period when the art of sculpture was far from being in its infancy.

A small theatre has also been discovered, and the bases of a long range of columns, which appear to have formed one side of a forum, or of some covered portico. A profusion of various coloured marbles has been everywhere found, and innumerable small *terra-cotta* heads, probably Lares.

Among the most interesting objects as yet brought to light, are the tombs. They are formed of six large slabs of stone; four for the sides and ends, and two for the roof, which

terminated in a sharp ridge. In some was found the skeleton, with armour over it, a spear-head by the side, the shaft having of course long since disappeared, a piece of money in the mouth, and a number of little vases and lachrymatories placed around. Immediately outside the northern gate, one of these tombs remained in a very perfect state.

We had not leisure to ascertain the fact ourselves, but it has been said that considerable ruins exist on the plain between Pæstum and Agropoli, or Gruboli, as the people of the country call it. Mr. Eustace, in speaking of this circumstance, says, "the ruins of Poseidonia, which cover the plain that extends from Pæstum to Agropoli, cannot but exhibit, if duly examined, some monument of the opulence and the refinement of its founders, the luxurious Sybarites." That this may be the case is rendered probable by the circumscribed limits of Pæstum itself, as compared with the vast number of religious edifices within its precincts, nearly half of the entire space being occupied by them.

Both on our way to and when returning from the temples, we made diligent search for the "*biferi rosaria Pæsti*," but without success: many other flowers we saw, but—alas!—no roses. We got back, somewhat tired, to our tent on the beach, where we found dinner prepared, of which, however, we were not to partake in peace. The wind had got up suddenly, and we had but just seated ourselves, when the crew of our boat, with the Captain, Paolo della Fauce, in advance, came to inform us, that the scirocco had set in, that a storm was inevitable, and that, *bon gré mal gré*, embark we must. We demurred:—"Santu Diavolu," rejoined he, "volete dunque

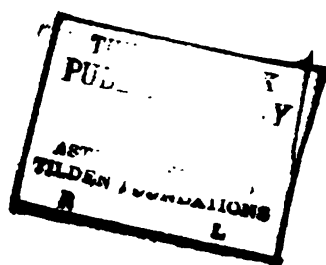


W. J. Cooke sc.

W. J. Cooke del.

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W. J. Cooke del.



ammazzare dodici Cristiani." In short, as it was of no moment, though we should have liked an evening in the temples, we assented, struck the tent, packed up the dinner, and went on board. In the confusion the dog took offence at an unceremonious kick, ran off, and was not thought of till we were on board. We whistled, and called "Mariano," in vain! the unfortunate poodle was left behind, "*ignota nudus arena*." The storm proved, as was expected, but a strong breeze, confirming us in our original impression, that the alarm had for its object to get us away from Pæstum. Away, however, we were. We soon passed the Punta della Licosa, on which is a ruined tower, destroyed by Lord Nelson, and the last object we saw was Cape Palinuro, a spot immortalized by the disaster of the pilot of Æneas. "*Gaudet cognomine terra*;"—Virgil, here, at least, was a true prophet,—

"Æternumque locus Palinuri nomen habebit."

The ruins of a sepulchral building were not long ago discovered near the shore, but others may decide whether they ever formed part of the tomb promised by Æneas to the troubled shade of his unfortunate helmsman. At a distance the promontory appeared like an island, the isthmus connecting it with the mainland being invisible. The heat during the night was insufferable, in spite of the draught from the sail blowing through the awning.

September 3.—When the sun rose and the mist dispersed, we made out that we were off Policastro, but at too great a distance to discern more than the outline of the mountains. The question was, how the day was to be got through, with our

small stock of amusement. I bathed, and solaced myself with Shakspeare and a pipe, listening occasionally to the singing of the crew, which was melancholy, if not musical according to our notions. The performers seemed to enjoy it, and joined lustily in the chorus, one of the crew leading. The custom is very ancient, and continues literally as described centuries ago by Longus :

*Ἔῃς μὲν ἀντοῖς κελουσης ναύτικας ἤδεν
ὦδας, οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ καθάπερ χόρος, ὁμοφωνῶς
Κατὰ καιρὸν τῆς ἐκείνου φωνῆς ἐβοῶν.*

—PAST. lib. III.

The men row standing up, and push instead of pulling the oar, illustrating the expression “remis incumbere.” The fancy, prevalent among all sailors, for puncturing or tattooing some parts of their skin, is carried to the most extravagant pitch by the Sicilians, some of whom have their arms completely covered with saints, flying angels, madonas, and crucifixes. One of our men, among many other devices, had St. George and the dragon most elaborately depicted on his skin. There are persons at Naples and elsewhere, called Marcatori di Santilli, who gain their livelihood by performing this operation.

The neighbourhood of the Lipari islands was once much infested by pirates, who used to put off in boats, and board any small craft which chanced to be becalmed, as was our case ; but all danger from such a quarter has long since ceased. While listening to the stories retailed by our sailors, of the atrocities committed by those people, a boat was seen approaching us from two feluccas, lying at some distance ; our

idlers, who had been lying on their backs, basking in the sun, sprang to their oars, and much noise and splashing ensued. As she drew near, we perceived that her crew consisted but of three men, and begged of our captain to stop and ascertain what they wanted. "No, no, hugamo! hugamo!"* he cried; nor could we without some difficulty persuade him of the improbability of three men venturing to attack eighteen. At length the dreaded boat came alongside, when it appeared that the men had been sent from the feluccas, to inquire whether the sea was safe, and if we thought any danger was to be apprehended. Our captain's valour, before at a very low ebb, now began to return; "Non c'è paura," he replied, "i Siciliani son' tutti brava gente:" it was quite reviving to him to find others as much frightened as himself.

When it became dark, we saw, at intervals, momentary flashes from the crater of Stromboli, the everlasting lighthouse of this sea. The night was perfectly calm, and the boat, left to herself, drifted about till morning.

September 4.—Before daybreak, a fine breeze sprang up, and bore us rapidly along, so that soon after eight o'clock we rounded the eastern extremity of Stromboli, and landed on the black beach near the principal village. After waiting a short time, the intendant, accompanied by two priests, came down to give us pratique. The paper, with our names and description, was stuck in a notch at the end of a stick, and

* "Hugamo," or "Isa, Isa con forza, per gloria isa," is equivalent to the "pull away" of the English. It seldom excites more than a short spurt, soon relapsing into talking and smoking.

held up before his spectacled eyes, when the crew and passengers were called over one by one. A number of the inhabitants having come down to look at us, we easily procured a guide, and set off at once to climb Monte Schicciola. The ground rises immediately from the shore, and is covered to a considerable height with vineyards. These passed, softer ashes succeeded, the passage of which was very fatiguing. The heat increased every moment, the sun shining full on our backs, and not any wind stirring; added to which, our feet sank so much in the yielding cinders, that two out of three steps were lost. When about half way up, we took advantage of the shade of a bush to halt for a few minutes, and found that the thermometer stood at 85°. Captain Smyth and Mr. Duppa agree in pronouncing the journey to the summit of Vesuvius, or even to that of *Ætna*, to be a trifling exertion in comparison with the violent exercise of climbing Stromboli. At length, after three hours and a quarter of sharp work, we reached the summit, but only to find ourselves enveloped in a dense fog, which chilled and wetted us, at the same time that it prevented our seeing more than a few yards in any direction. The wind, too, from which the mountain had previously sheltered us, was here very high, and blew the ashes into our faces with disagreeable force. We heard very distinctly the report caused by each ejection of the volcano, but as we could see nothing, we prepared to descend,—a far less difficult operation than that which we had just performed. We returned down the south side of the ridge, where the soft ashes, yielding at every step, enabled us to run as fast as we liked. Near the boundary of the vine-

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yards, we came to our guide's house, who regaled us with fresh water, and quantities of delicious grapes, of that small species which, taking its name from Corinth, is known to us, when dried, as currants. Upon regaining the shore, we found that the time we had taken to descend was less than one-fourth of that occupied in reaching the summit.

I lost no time in getting first on board, and then overboard without delay, which was most welcome after a day spent, as it were, in a coal-mine. The toilette completed, we landed, and addressed ourselves *con amore* to some excellent fish, by the natives called "*saraco*," and a bottle of capital Malmsey wine, one of the very few that we could hear of for sale. This is some of the best wine in the Mediterranean, but it is not made in any great quantity, and is hard to procure, except just after the vintage.

Stromboli is about nine miles in circumference, and, rising in most parts abruptly from the sea, exhibits at a distance the appearance of an enormous half-burned pastile. Unlike *Ætna*, *Vesuvius*, and other volcanoes that rage at intervals, and then relapse into inactivity, it is in a constant state of eruption, sometimes more violent than at others; but there has been no authentic account, during many centuries, of its having been in a state of entire rest. At what period it emerged from the waves is uncertain, but, like the remainder of the *Æolian* Islands, it is altogether of volcanic origin. The highest point of the mountain, according to Capt. Smyth, is 2171 feet from the level of the sea. The soil, in the cultivated parts, is a kind of black mould, consisting in a great measure of scorixæ and pulverized lava, susceptible of a high degree of fertility. There

are several caverns in different parts of the island, in one of which, near a spot called Malpasso, is found the beautiful mineral known by the name of specular iron. The strand below the village where we landed is perfectly black, having precisely the appearance of coarse gunpowder, and terminates in a rocky point, in which is a cave called the Grotta dei Bovi marini.

The inhabitants amount to about 1500, and are chiefly employed in fishing or in cultivating the ground ; their houses have flat roofs, and, with few exceptions, are only one story high.

The water all around Stromboli is extremely deep, and as clear as crystal, and it is not a little singular, that it is deepest at the side nearest the crater ; nor has the matter constantly thrown out during such a long succession of ages had any sensible effect upon the soundings.

The boatmen told us, that the volcano has been generally remarked to be more active in winter than in summer, and in stormy, than in fine weather, but particularly when the scirocco is blowing. Another of their stories we could not so easily credit,—that fish are frequently found in the water burned to death by the hot stones thrown out of the crater.

Like most other volcanoes, Stromboli is reported to be one of the passages to the infernal regions, and various are the stories recorded of persons who have been seen endeavouring to escape from its crater ; each party, in fact, consigning to its flames those whom they think ought to be there. Amongst others are Henry VIII., and poor Anna Boleyn, the latter of whom, one would have hoped had been sufficiently unhappy

in this life, to have secured her from such a fate in the next. But the best authenticated case seems to be that of a government contractor named Booty, who furnished biscuits to the navy, and who is said to have been seen by a whole ship's company, going down the crater, escorted by two devils. When the ship returned to England, this story got abroad, and occasioned some very curious proceedings in Doctors' Commons, instituted by the relatives of the deceased contractor, who were naturally not over well pleased at such posthumous defamation. The tale, of course, would not have been complete, had it not appeared that the unfortunate Mr. Booty had departed this life on the same day that he had been seen in such bad company. The details of this amusing trial are recorded in the Naval Chronicle.

The natives, we remarked, call this island *Strongoli*, which approaches much nearer to its ancient name, Στρόγγυλη. In fact, as a general rule, it may be observed, that foreigners have been the first to corrupt the ancient names of places, many of which, particularly in Greece, are known on the spot by no other appellation than that which they always bore, though we are accustomed to apply to them some barbarous abbreviation, devised by the Italians or French. The latter have certainly more to answer for in this respect than any modern nation; they think nothing so good, but that they can make it better, and, like the Romans of old, consider themselves bound to suit every name to the genius of their own language, poor and cacophonous as it is. With them Piacenza, in the north of Italy, is *Plaisance*; Pozzuoli is *Pouzoles*; and Dionysius Halicarnassensis is cut down into *Denys d'Halicarnasse*.

Between Stromboli and Lipari lie Basiluzzo, Panaria, and a number of islets. These are supposed by some authors to be the wrecks of an immense crater, the remainder of which, time, and the action of the waves, have combined to destroy. Their common granitic base, unlike that of the other islands, and strata inclining towards a common centre, give probability to this opinion. The Sicilian antiquaries imagine that they formed part of the Euonymus of Strabo; but were the inquiry of any consequence, it would, after all, terminate in mere conjecture.

Lipari, the largest and most fertile of the Æolian Islands, is about nineteen miles in circumference, and, besides several villages, has one considerable town, which is the seat of government. It was once a place of some importance, as may be gathered from the large amount of tribute annually paid by the inhabitants to the elder Dionysius, and from the various remains of sculpture and ancient edifices that have been discovered. It contains several old craters, no longer acting as volcanoes, but hot springs are still found in many parts of the island, affording evidence that the subterranean fires are not yet extinguished. Aristotle mentions it in terms which render it probable that in his time fire issued from some orifice, much in the same manner as it now does at Stromboli: *Καὶ τὸ ἐν τῇ Λιπαρᾷ δὲ πυρ φάνερον καὶ φλογώδες, οὐ μὲν ἡμέρας, ἀλλὰ νυκτὸς μόνον καίεσθαι λέγεται*. The principal curiosity of the island is a mountain called Campo Bianco, consisting entirely of pumice, and from which a great part of Europe is supplied with that article.

The castle, standing on a rock immediately over the port,

was built by Charles V. ; it is in a neglected state, as are all the fortresses in the Neapolitan dominions, but answers well enough for a state prison, the purpose to which it is now applied. Some of the unfortunate Carbonari, who attempted to establish a constitution at Naples, are confined here, and have been so, *untried*, for eleven years, and it is more than probable that their incarceration will end only with their lives. Upwards of 4000 of these victims of cowardice and oppression are thus immured alive in the various prisons and islands of the kingdom of Naples, cut off from their friends, whom they are never permitted to see, and with an allowance from the government barely sufficient to support existence. Despotism must be a most desirable treasure, if worth retaining at such a price. It is to be hoped that the time will yet arrive, when some party may be found sufficiently united—for union is the only thing requisite—to force upon the court of Naples the wholesome truth contained in the American declaration of independence, that “government is an institution for the benefit of the governed, and that, when it becomes subversive of that end, it ought to be destroyed.” Cases will undoubtedly occur, where, for the general welfare, it may be necessary to disregard individual suffering, or, to use the words of Montesquieu, “il y a des cas où il faut mettre pour un moment une voile sur la Liberté, comme l’on cache les statues des dieux;” but neither justice nor policy can palliate the perpetual imprisonment of these unfortunate persons, who could not, from their number, have *all* been ringleaders, and who have surely been already punished with sufficient severity to deter them from a similar attempt in future. “Certo,” says Muratori, not

~~the~~ the least illustrious of Neapolitans, "non sarà giammai degno di reggere, chi non sa mai perdonare."

Near the south-western point of the island is a very singular rock, called Pietra-lunga, 150 feet high, composed of vitrified volcanic laminæ : it is perforated at the base, so that boats can row through it. Across a deep channel, about a mile wide, lies Vulcano. The northern extremity of that island, which is the most southerly of the group, presents a perpendicular wall of black lava, having at a distance the appearance of a mole stretching into the sea. Separated from the principal crater by a plain of ashes is a smaller cone called Vulcanello. There is no village upon it, the only inhabitants being a few persons employed in manufacturing alum and sulphur, the materials for which are procured, in great quantities, from the crater. It is about fifteen miles in circuit, and nothing can be more forbidding than the general aspect presented by the northern side ; there is not the slightest appearance of vegetation,—all is lava, ashes, and desolation. The soil of Lipari is more inviting, and the farmers have been very successful in making it produce grapes and corn. At some distance to the westward lie the three small islands, Salina, Filicuri, and Alicuri, which we did not visit.

Before taking leave of these curious regions we had an instance of the habitual sobriety of the Sicilians, or of their indifference to ardent spirits. Having offered our boatmen a bottle of brandy to assist them in passing the time, they declined it, begging that we would give them macaroni instead : their usual fare is bread and onions. At dusk, after a squabble with the Doganieri, who abound in his Neapolitan

*A. J. ... Bolognese ...
 A. J. ... 1877*

Majesty's dominions, we went on board. The wind was fair, but it was necessary to row for some distance, to get from under the lee of the island.

At last we were fairly away, and stood for Messina with a fresh breeze, through a sea as blue as indigo, anchoring in that harbour before daylight on the following morning.

CHAPTER II.

MESSINA ; ITS GENERAL APPEARANCE ; POPULATION.—SKETCH OF THE
MODERN HISTORY OF SICILY.

MESSINA, one of the three principal cities of Sicily, is beautifully situated at the foot of a range of mountains, covered in some parts with wood, in others with vineyards and olive groves, and broken into every variety of form. The town follows the curve of the shore, and presents, from the sea, an appearance truly magnificent ; the noble range of buildings, upwards of a mile in length, which skirts the Marina, concealing from view the narrow lanes, or whatever else could offend the eye. Had the design been carried out, this row of buildings would have equalled anything of the kind in Europe, but many of the houses are not finished, the front wall only having been built, while others have been roofed at half their intended height, and the pillars which ornament their fronts, being thus, as it were, cut off at the middle, have, on a closer inspection, a mean and ruinous appearance. The disastrous earthquake of 1783 having destroyed this part of the town, it was begun to be rebuilt on a scale of grandeur to which the funds of the inhabitants were inadequate, and it is more than probable that it will never be completed. The trade of Messina is more considerable than that of any other port in Sicily ;

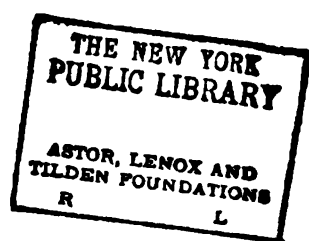


From R. H. Ladd.

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Engraved by H. Jones & Son, 10, New York, N.Y.

H. T. Cooke, Jr.



the Marina, consequently, is crowded with shipping, which, from the depth of water, can moor close to the quay. The harbour is nearly circular, being enclosed to the east and north by the remarkable tongue of land, which, from its form resembling a sickle, was called *Zancle*, and gave the ancient name to the city. It subsequently changed its name to Messana, but whether from the assistance afforded to, or against, the inhabitants, by the Messenians of Peloponnesus, is uncertain. The citadel, a work of great strength, was built under the direction of Vauban, and was much improved by the English, during their occupation of Sicily. It is the only fortification in the island that is kept in tolerable repair, but as the principal means of offence are directed against the town and port, its importance as a military post is much diminished.* The inhabitants are estimated at 60,000, but as the population returns are notoriously incorrect, this must be regarded merely as an approximation. From their frequent intercourse with strangers, but particularly with the English, they are more cleanly, with regard to their persons and houses, than the rest of the Sicilians, though this is saying but little in their favour. The streets, however, are generally free from those heaps of filth and offal which abound in so many of the other towns; perhaps this is to be attributed as much to the circumstance of the ground falling towards the sea, by which means the rain performs the part of scavenger, as to any inherent love of neatness in the population. Several of the streets are built with regularity, and paved with large blocks of stone or lava, and the

* It must be borne in mind that this account was written before the late revolution.

Corso in which we established ourselves at the *Leone d'Oro*, the Strada Ferdinanda, and the Strada d'Austria, are handsome, wide, and very long. The Messinesi present little in their customs or appearance to attract the attention of a stranger. Principally engaged in commerce, they are more active and bustling, if less courteous and obliging, than the other Sicilians, and are accused of being mercenary and inhospitable. The climate is more than usually temperate in summer, the tide which flows through the straits causing a constant circulation of air.

The long occupation of the island of Sicily by the English troops, and the serious changes in the constitution of the country, which were so much facilitated by the presence of so strong a force, give to the inhabitants of the British dominions a greater interest than is usual in the subsequent lot of their former allies or protégés. In order to put my readers in possession of the facts which led to the establishment of the Constitution of 1812, the thorough carrying out of which is nominally the object of the sanguinary revolution which has within the last two years taken place, I must subjoin a brief summary of the events of preceding years. With respect to its ancient history, many references will be made in the following pages. After the conquest of the island by the Romans it long remained a province of that great empire, and underwent the usual vicissitudes of a dependent state. Subsequently it came under the power of Charlemagne. It was overrun by the Saracens, who, in their turn, were expelled from it by the Normans, and years after that the French were in possession of it. The liberation of the

island from their rule, by the revolution better known under the name of the Sicilian Vespers, will be mentioned elsewhere at greater length. It will suffice here to say that at last it merged in the great empire of Charles V., and became part of the kingdom of Naples, to which it still remains the noblest appendage. "There are," says Mr. Galt, "moral features amongst every people, which history never describes ; and in estimating the character of Sicilians this consideration must be borne in mind,—the island has been so long connected with Naples, that the two countries, in opinion, have become almost inseparably blended. Still the circumstances of the Sicilian government serve to show that the political attachments of the people have never been lasting, nor have they evinced that they possessed that resolute courage which has often enabled small communities to acquire immortal renown in their opposition to superior powers." The relative positions of the Two Sicilies remained unchanged at the commencement of the French revolutionary war. Disputes had occurred late in the eighteenth century, between the King of Naples and the French authorities, but a pacification was effected between them in 1796, though destined to be but of short duration, as in 1798, much alarm being felt at the expedition under Buonaparte to Malta, preparations for war were commenced at Naples. That good grounds for apprehension existed is apparent from the despatches of Lord Nelson, who, when proceeding to the blockade of the French in Malta, expresses hopes that he may still be in time to save Sicily, and urges the importance of effecting that object by starving the French in La Valletta. The presence of the French troops in Rome deterred

the King for some time from taking any active steps against them, and they in their turn were restrained by the co-operation of the English fleet with the Neapolitans. However, when the victory of the Nile took place, the exultation of the latter was great ; the monarch published a proclamation from San Germano, in which he states that his sole object is to defend his religion, re-animate divine worship, and secure to his subjects the blessings which God had given them, and encourages his troops in glowing terms, adding that it was better to die gloriously than live oppressed. In November he accordingly entered the Roman States, where he was resolutely met by the republican armies, and defeated. Having failed in his military projects, he returned to Naples, and in December embarked for Palermo in Lord Nelson's ship, conferring on that gallant officer, shortly after their arrival, the title and estates of the dukedom of Bronte.

In 1801 a fresh treaty of peace was arranged with France, and for the next few years a certain show of amity existed between the powers ; but in November, 1805, the Russian and English squadrons appeared in the Bay of Naples, and landed some troops. Exasperated by this breach of the promised neutrality, Buonaparte issued a decree announcing that the Neapolitan royal family had ceased to reign. After a short stay in Italy, the Russian troops were re-embarked, and their fleet departed. Sir James Craig, who commanded the British detachment, aware that with his small force he could not effectually defend Naples, likewise embarked, and landed them in Sicily, the royal family retiring to Palermo. ~~Jerome~~ ⁺ Buonaparte was soon afterwards proclaimed King of Naples. In the

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following spring Sir Sydney Smith arrived with a force of five ships of the line for the defence of Sicily. Sir James Craig, who was at Messina, resigned his command to Sir James Stuart, to whom was intrusted the defence of the coast from Milazzo to Cape Passaro. Having been urged to take active measures against the enemy, he crossed the Straits, and fought and gained the battle of Maida, July 4, 1806 ; but, from the same motives which had actuated his predecessor, again returned to his former position, occupying the fortress on the Rock of Scylla. Sir James was joined soon afterwards by General Fox, who appointed Major-General Sir Edward Paget to the command of the reserve of the army. Sir James was urgently solicited to make an offensive movement against Naples, which he declined doing.

The conduct of the Court during the course of these events was most injudicious. No attention was paid to the expressed dissatisfaction or respectful remonstrances of the people. The restrictions on commerce, which had been before felt as most injurious, were continued, and the disappointment was the greater as the nation not unnaturally thought that their loyalty deserved quite the opposite treatment. By degrees the discontent began to extend against the British, who appeared to turn the scale to the side of wrong, while upholding those who committed it. In 1808 ~~Jerome~~ Buonaparte left Italy, and the crown was transferred to Murat, who had not long taken possession of his new dominions when he turned his attention towards the invasion of Sicily, and made active preparations for the expedition. By degrees he collected in Calabria a force exceeding 30,000 men, with a formidable squadron of gun-boats and ves-

+ Jerome

sels of all sorts for the purposes of transport. Sir James Stuart on his side was not idle; the line of coast occupied by him was strongly fortified, and a succession of skirmishes took place between the two squadrons, while much shot and shell was expended in a useless and undestructive fire on both sides. A considerable body of King Joachim's troops effected a landing near the Faro di Messina in the course of the autumn, but, being left unsupported, were attacked by the British under General Campbell, and dispersed, many prisoners being taken. The difficulties that stood in the way of success being obvious, and other events likewise pressing themselves on the attention of Joachim, he finally abandoned the enterprise, and the British troops were left to repose in their former quarters, for a period which is still referred to by the islanders with feelings of affection and regret.

X + 1811.—Experience, however, seemed to be thrown away on the advisers of the Sicilian monarch. "They learned nothing, they forgot nothing," and affairs continued to be carried on in the most arbitrary and offensive manner. Though the English were virtually masters of the island, the internal regulations of the kingdom were not interfered with, and the conduct of the authorities during 1811 produced a ferment which might have been long foreseen. Royal edicts were issued at the commencement of the year, which, according to all authority and custom, were utterly unconstitutional. Some of them related to matters of a completely domestic nature, but one, which went to impose a tax of one per cent. on all payments, was protested against by the British merchants at Palermo and elsewhere, who would have been sufferers by it. Following their

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example, the Sicilian barons in their turn remonstrated against the decrees : they, however, far from succeeding in their object, were treated with scorn, some put into arrest, and others even exiled. The connexion between Naples and Austria gave rise to a greater intimacy with France, and all the influence of the Sicilian Queen was given to the furtherance of the French connexion. This having become known to Lord W. Bentinck, at that time in chief command, and who was aware of the incapacity of the King to manage his people for his own or their advantage, he made such representations as to render it evident to the British Ministry that the authority must be placed in the hand of the nation, supported by the British army. Lord William Bentinck was declared Captain-General, and the King abdicated in favour of his son.

The attention of statesmen was then turned to the preparation of a constitution, and the influence of England caused that of their own country to be adopted as a model. The preparatory steps were taken for carrying these plans into immediate effect. The exiled barons were recalled, and were received with hearty rejoicings at Palermo, to the great annoyance of the Queen. The Parliament of the island assembled in the usual manner at Palermo on the 20th of July, and, under the instructions of the Vicar-General, or delegate of the royal authority, proceeded to discuss the important question of the new constitution of the country. The first great step was to fix the limits of the legislative, executive, and judicial departments. The first was lodged in the parliamentary body. The executive was intrusted to the sovereign, whose person was declared inviolable, but whose ministers were made

responsible. The judges were declared to be independent, subject, however, to impeachment by the Commons, if guilty of any improper conduct. Alterations were made in the constitution of the parliamentary bodies; while the privileges of the two houses, and the mode in which the business was transacted and laws enacted, were in a great degree copied from the English legislative bodies. Many concessions were made by the barons; they did not object even to the loss of their ancient feudal rights, taking merely that rank amongst their fellow-citizens to which by their birth they were entitled.

Whoever will take the trouble to look through the proceedings of the Parliament after the royal sanction had been communicated to them to the above effect, will see that that body developed and established them in such a way as to secure all the liberty that could be rationally wished, and as much *protection to native industry* as could well be given, as "all ecclesiastical benefices, employments, dignities, offices, and appointments of every description whatever, without any distinction and exception," were by law to be given to Sicilians, and Sicilians alone.

The Court, meantime, was not so well satisfied with this change from absolute to limited monarchy, and the English authority was an object of distrust and dislike to it. The subsidy which Great Britain paid was, however, too needful to be lightly risked; and thus the military force, which might have been, in the hands of the Queen's party, a powerful instrument of evil, was left as before under the orders of the Captain-General, who for more than a year continued in command, with possession of the strongest places in the island.

In July, 1814, Sicily having still the appearance of an English garrison, the termination of the Peninsular struggle restored to Ferdinand the possession of the moiety of his kingdom, so long in the hands of Murat. In addressing his Parliament on that auspicious event, he made a pompous speech, in which he dwelt on the various merits of the new Constitution with all the complacency of one who had willingly granted it ; though, even at this early stage of its existence, the representatives of some of the principal towns of Sicily were excluded from Parliament. In the following year, when about to return to Naples, he promised an amnesty and oblivion of past offences. Disturbances, however, broke out again in 1821, owing principally to the illiberal manner in which, despite of the treaty, Government was carried on ; and the Austrians came to the assistance of the King. 1823 saw a formal recognition by him of the Constitution of 1812, and matters continued in a state of tranquillity for several years. An attempt made by the Neapolitan Government to give to France what would have been virtually a monopoly of the sulphur trade, was protested against by England, in 1840, as a breach of the treaty of navigation, which had been concluded with Naples some twenty years before. Though legal doubts existed as to the right of the Neapolitans to act as they did (some high authorities maintaining that they were justified in so doing), yet the English Government took the shortest mode of settling the complicated question, and, adding weight to the remonstrance which they made in the first instance, by sending a squadron into the Bay of Naples, the matter was speedily arranged to their satisfaction. Sulphur in the mean time rose

200 per cent. in value. Subsequently to these events, a close observer might have seen that, though the surface was calm, yet the elements of mischief were at work, and have detected the "*ignes suppositos cineri doloso*." It needed but the spark, which in 1846-7 Pope Pío IX., by rushing so precipitately into measures of reform, for which the people were wholly unfit, may be said to have applied, to light up the blaze of revolution on the Italian Continent, whence the flame rapidly spread to their already discontented insular neighbours.

S/4
In December, 1847, the Duke of ~~Terra~~ Capriola was Lieutenant of Sicily. Party feeling ran high in the capital city between the centralists and federal sections of politicians, the former desiring a separation of the island of Sicily from the rest of the dominions of the King; the others wishing to maintain the union, while Naples and Palermo were alternately to be the seat of the temporary government;—much, I suppose, in the way that certain parties nearer home advocated what they termed Rotatory Parliaments, College Green *versus* Westminster. No agreement was come to by these parties; and on the 12th January, 1848, matters were brought to a crisis, by the arrival at Palermo of a rebel force, who were received with acclamation, and obtained possession of the town. Ruggiero Settimo, a naval officer, with the Duke of ~~Terra~~ di Falco and others, were, about the 15th January, appointed a Provisional Government; and about the same time proclamations were issued at Naples, granting certain concessions, and substituting the Principe D'Aquila, brother to the King, as Lieutenant of the island. Shells had been thrown from the forts into the town on the 12th and following days. The con-

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sular body protested against this proceeding, and the chiefs of the constitutional party addressed Lord Napier, Chargé d'Affaires at Naples, between whom and Prince Petrulla some communications passed, the diplomatist asserting the rights of the Sicilians to the Constitution of 1812. The first proclamations of the Provisional Government were dated January 17th, and on the 27th the palace surrendered to their troops; much damage was done to the furniture of the building, but the sanctity of the chapel attached to it was respected, and it, as well as the paintings, was preserved from injury. The building *Le Finanze* was also taken, but here some who were captured fell victims to the barbarity of the assailants. Lord Minto, who at this time was at Rome, on receipt of the news from Palermo, seems to have considered the cause of the Neapolitans as quite lost, and in his despatches discussed the probability of the maintenance of the union, which he deemed the best course, though it could not be forced on the Sicilians. Lord Napier, at Naples, while offering his mediatorial services, reserved to himself power to keep in view the claims of Sicilian nationality, and objected to the union unless sanctioned by a separate national assembly.

While such was the state of affairs at the capital, the other principal towns on the coast were not idle. At Messina symptoms of action had appeared early in January, and Captain Codrington had been sent, in H.M.S. *Thetis*, to watch the proceedings, and afford protection to the British residents. The commandant of the Neapolitan troops gave notice to the consuls on the 12th of January, that the city was to be considered in a state of siege. The revolt, delayed

a few days, broke out on the 29th, and the town was bombarded from the forts, under protest from Captain Codrington, the fire being principally directed against the Marina. On the 22nd of February a breach was made in the fort at the end of the Marina, which was taken, and about the same time the Porto Franco was set on fire by shells from the citadel. So rapid, indeed, was the success of the insurgents, that, even on the 8th of February, Lord Minto stated in his despatch, that, with the exception of the citadel of Messina, the whole island was in their power. A *peaceful* revolution took place at Girgenti, on the 22nd January; and a manifestation of the joy of the inhabitants was made on the night of the 1st February, at the theatre Carolino, where, amidst the acclamations of hundreds, the national hymn was sung to "a house overflowing with rank and fashion," followed by cheers for the British commodore and squadron, and cries of "Viva la Costituzione del 1812." Catania also was in arms, and here too the insurgents got possession, not, however, without bloodshed, for in the short combat that took place the landlord of the Corona hotel, Don Puddo Abate, met his fate from a musket-ball from the royalist ranks. The negotiations for a Constitution were carried on amidst these various scenes of slaughter and bloodshed. The Castle of Palermo fell in February; and in the course of the same month another barbarous murder of Sbirri took place, under the leadership of a ruffian named Santoro, who was, however, shortly afterwards killed in an attack made by his band upon the National Guards. Some misapprehensions seem to have been entertained of British proceedings at the chief courts of Europe; and we find Lord Palmerston in

March writing letters explanatory of the views of the English Government, disavowing any guarantee by the Government of the Constitution of 1812, and ridiculing the suspicion entertained by the Neapolitans, that England would avail herself of the opportunity of Sicily being garrisoned by native troops, to realize projects which the Neapolitans only accused her of dreaming about, it being enough to say that the expense and embarrassment of such a possession would far more than counterbalance any possible advantage which Great Britain could derive from its acquisition. Lord Minto sailed for Palermo on the 7th of March, hoping speedily to negotiate an armistice, having previously notified to Prince Cariatì his project for settling the pending differences. A royal decree was published on the same day, and reached Palermo at the same time as did the accounts of the revolution in Paris. Encouraged by this event, the Provisional Government did not hurry themselves in replying to the overtures made to them by the British minister, who foresaw that the rejection by the ministry at Naples of the last offers made by the Provisional Government at Palermo, would probably lead to an attempt at a separation of the two countries, and a divided monarchy. Nor was this result long delayed. On the 25th of March, the President of the general committee declared the Parliament legally convoked, and it was opened on the same day with the proper state and formalities. The President made a long speech, giving an account of his stewardship, and after a short adjournment the two chambers proceeded to business. As in their British prototype, a strong opposition soon formed in the Commons, and the existence of the House of Peers was threatened by the

factionous proceedings of some ecclesiastics, who had been proposed as new members of the Upper House by the Commons, but rejected by the Peers.

On the 14th of April, news having arrived of the King's refusal to yield further, the Houses formally proclaimed him dethroned, and this resolution was notified by the President to the British Foreign Office two days after it had passed. The statues of the Bourbons were demolished, and decrees passed for the purchase of arms and ammunition; and the persons intrusted with the execution of the purchase, finding that the export of arms from France was prohibited, forthwith proceeded to England. The Duke of Genoa was the person on whom the eyes of the Provisional Government were first turned, as their future Sovereign, and so early as the 8th of May, a notification was made from home to the British representative at Turin, that, in the event of the Duke getting into possession of the throne of Sicily, he would be acknowledged by Her Majesty the Queen of England. A subsequent despatch explains that it was not intended to point out any individual in particular, but merely to show that any prince elected by the Sicilians, and in possession, would be acknowledged, while hopes were expressed that a Neapolitan might be preferred. Five candidates were ultimately brought forward, one of whom was Prince Louis Napoleon, now President of the French Republic. The vote of the Houses was given in July, and their choice fell on the Duke of Genoa. The King naturally protested against the whole proceeding. Lord Palmerston's letter was read amidst bursts of applause, and shortly afterwards a similar announcement

was made from M. Lamartine. Salutes were fired from the British and French men of war in the Bay of Palermo, and the Sicilian forts ; and Ruggiero Settimo, who had just been declared Lieutenant-General, and Senator for life, was also received on board the British flag-ship, under a salute of twelve guns.

The Sicilian insurgents meanwhile were not content to stay at home and confine their attentions to carrying out their own internal changes. An outbreak having taken place at Cosenza, on the Italian Peninsula, a body, stated at above 1000 men, but probably not so numerous, crossed over from Milazzo to Paola, on the Calabrian coast, with the view of offering their assistance to the republicans. The royalist troops, however, made short work of it, and the insurrection was nearly quelled early in July. The Calabresi left their allies to their fate, but vessels having been despatched to their succour, 800 of them embarked and steered for Corfu. Off that island they were discovered by the Neapolitan steamer of war Stromboli, which, hoisting British colours, ran alongside, and then substituting the Neapolitan flag, fired two guns, and took possession of the brigantine and decked boat in which the fugitives had escaped. Having supplied both vessels with water and provisions, of which they were in great want, and taken some of the chiefs on board his own ship, the commander of the Stromboli steered for Reggio. A long correspondence took place between Lord Napier and the authorities at Naples, about the capture; statements and counter-statements were made respecting the distance from the shore at which it was effected, and stress was laid on the improper use made

on board of the Stromboli of the British flag. Prince Cariati, in reply, justified the latter proceeding, and denied the accuracy of the statements made by the captives, about the distance from the shore. The whole thing was quickly set at rest, when enough time had elapsed to get the evidence of the authorities in the Ionian Islands, and the opinion of the Admiralty at home. Lord Seaton said that the capture was not made within the three miles from the coast over which the British jurisdiction extends; and while the Sicilians said that they were at the time within swimming distance of the shore, Colonel England, of the Royal Artillery, who was by chance an eye-witness of the capture, from Paleocastrizza, stated that the vessels were eight or ten miles distant. As regards the use of the British flag for the purposes of deception, Captain Hamilton, by direction of the Lords of the Admiralty, wrote, that, as the practice is constantly adopted by our own cruisers, no ground of complaint existed. Prince Cariati assented so far to Lord Napier's proposals, as to give orders that no Neapolitan vessel should in future hoist the English flag, provided a similar promise were given by the Sicilian Government.

Meanwhile the Government at Naples had not lost sight of their object, the subjugation and retention of the island; and in the first days of August a large force of steam vessels was assembled in the bay, to embark the stores and ammunition necessary to such an enterprise. The troops in Calabria were at liberty, the insurrectionary movement having subsided, and the impression was that the invading force would assemble at Reggio. The Sicilians, aware of the preparations on the Continent, manifested great activity in preparing for

resistance; and a report having prevailed at Catania that the Neapolitan fleet had entered the harbour of Syracuse, the National Guard flew to arms, raised barricades, and illuminated their houses with a zeal which proved to be altogether unnecessary. One act of the Legislature which occurred about this time is not unworthy of remark. While incessantly occupied in preparing the means of repelling the forces of the King, Parliament yet found time to pass a vote for the expulsion of the Jesuits. In the middle of August the ministry of March gave in their resignations, but no great difficulties were experienced in its reconstruction, under the auspices of the Marchese Torre Arsa. On the 31st of August the Neapolitan flotilla sailed for Reggio. Hostilities had some days previously recommenced, in consequence of the Sicilian batteries having fired into a Neapolitan steamer, which grounded within gunshot. The citadel in its turn fired upon the battery, and also threw some shells into the town. On the 1st of September notice of approaching hostilities was given to the consuls in the maritime towns, and a day or two later a considerable force landed at Messina from the fleet. The town was bombarded on the 3rd, and subsequent days; on the 8th, the flotilla of gunboats was taken possession of by the King's troops; and on the 9th a treaty of submission was entered into. The consular body protested against the conduct of the commanding officers of the Neapolitan forces, while the captains of the French and English men of war appealed to the feelings of the general, and urged a truce, in order to avoid further effusion of blood. On receipt of the intelligence from Messina, Admiral Baudin promptly took a decided step

in the direction of humanity, and, though he communicated his intention to Admiral Parker, did not wait for a reply, but gave orders to the commanders of the French forces on the coast to oppose the continuance of hostilities. This did not tend to relieve Lord Napier from embarrassment, feeling as he did that to unite in such a step was "scarcely reconcileable with strict principle," though circumstances might render it imperative. Prince Cariati stated that interference would be viewed by him as spontaneous on the part of the British Admiral, as Lord Palmerston, he asserted, had assured the Neapolitan Minister, that nothing of the sort would be sanctioned by his Government. How far this was correct it is hard to say, but on the 22nd, Lord Palmerston approves of the resolution of Lord Napier and the Admiral, to support, by force if necessary, a cessation of warfare. The armistice was announced in the official organ at Palermo on the 13th, as having been imposed on the King of Naples by England and France, and agreed to by the Sicilian government, without in any way compromising their cause.

Previous to these events attention had been drawn in England to the contest in Sicily by certain questions put to the Ministers about ordnance alleged to have been supplied to the Sicilians. Messrs. Hood and Co., ironfounders, having undertaken to supply, at a "very early period," fifteen pieces of cannon to the Sicilian government, and being unable to do so in the time specified, applied to the Secretary of the Ordnance, to be allowed to receive back from the stores of that department the ordnance required, on the understanding that they should be replaced. Mr. Butler, on the part

of the Secretary, states in his letter to Mr. Addington, that the Board have reason to believe that the "Sicilian government" "specified by Messrs. Hood, means the Island of Sicily, which has declared its independence of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies." In reply to this Mr. Addington, on the part of Lord Palmerston, says, "that his Lordship sees no objection to a compliance with Messrs. Hood's request, if the guns are not immediately wanted for the British service." Beyond the few words alluded to, no notice seems to have been taken of this somewhat injudicious proceeding; but the probability of such remarks seems to have occurred to Lord Palmerston, and apparently feeling that the course he had adopted was not very defensible, he wrote in January, 1849, to Mr. Temple, minister at Naples, saying that "it was possible the King's government might complain that facility had been given in England to the Sicilian contractor, and in that case that he was to say that the authority was given *inadvertently*, that Her Majesty's Government regretted what had occurred, and that nothing of the sort should hereafter occur, while the differences between the Sicilians and the King of Naples were unsettled."

In pursuance of the interposition decided upon by the admirals, and sanctioned by their respective governments at home, the naval officers at Messina settled lines of demarcation, separated by a neutral ground, which were to be respected by the belligerents. Certain ports were also selected, which were to be open to the vessels of each flag. The Neapolitans held Messina and Milazzo, with the north coast, to Termini, and the coasts of the Faro di Messina, as far south as Scaletta; while the line of demarcation for the other side commenced

at Punto Tyndaro, and extended in nearly a straight line to Taormina. Secret orders were given to the naval commanders to interpose with the vessels under their command between the parties, should hostilities be renewed, and, if warnings failed, to deter them by shot, till the object was attained. Lord Palmerston, in his letters to Mr. Temple, allows that the case was not one to justify forcible interference on the part of Great Britain, but, taking into account the barbarities committed, confirms the proceedings of the admirals, which he expressly does on the grounds that destruction, and not subjugation, had been the object of the Neapolitans.

During this short pause in domestic warfare, the attention of the Provisional Government at Palermo had been drawn to the financial state of the country under their rule, and steps had been taken for a revision of the old system of taxation. One very important measure carried into effect by them was the abolition of the *Multura*, or tax on the grinding of corn; they having, in the first instance, tried the effect upon the revenue by reducing it at once fifty per cent. As this tax was unusually severe, and was considered as having in some degree led to the revolution, a short account of it, given on the authority of the British Consul, Mr. Goodwin, to Lord Napier, may not be uninteresting. The *Multura*, or tax on the grinding of wheat, barley, and Indian corn, which had been collected by wealthy peasants for many years, was assigned in 1842 to a company of revenue farmers. The amount which had hitherto been levied on the net weight was thenceforth to be charged on the gross, *including* the weight of the sack. The peasant who had corn to grind was to appear before the village

collector, to declare the gross weight of the sack, to pay the duty thereon at about 4s. 6d. per quarter, and to take a receipt in duplicate for such payment. He was then allowed fifteen days to carry his corn to the mill, and present his receipts to the weight-master, whose certificate was necessary for the grinding. If the quantity verified exceeded that declared by above thirty per cent., the corn was to be confiscated, and the peasant fined fifteen ducats; but if it fell short, the receipt stood good, and no return of duty was made to the owner. The grinding finished, one of the two receipts was kept by the miller, and the other was given to the peasant, who was required to get it *visé* by the weight-master, with "visto uscire," before he departed, on the pain of confiscation in case of a search on the road. The peasant was to carry the receipt to his own home, and show it to the village collector, on pain of losing the flour, together with his horse or mule, and of being fined fifteen ducats for neglect. These severe regulations were much aggravated by further instructions.

The plan was carried fully into practice, and the practice tallied with the principle. Searching of houses, breaking open of barns, closing of mills, limitation of bakers' shops, arrests of peasants, seizures of horses and mules, and of carts and panniers, heavy fines for oversights, close imprisonment, local exile, and transportation beyond the seas for various offences, without form of trial, but by act of police, became the order of the day in the interior of Sicily. Had the reduction now made in the amount of the tax been accompanied by an improvement in the mode of collection, the double object of benefit to the treasury and alleviation to the peasant might have been attained;

as it was, the tax-payer was relieved, but the exchequer impoverished; and the produce for three months having fallen short by £3000 of the expense of collection, the minister, left to choose between a dead loss and an obnoxious tax, did away with the latter with the joyful concurrence of Parliament; and though a time, when forced contributions were necessary in order to carry on bellicose operations, seems originally ill-chosen for so important a remission, yet the first step having been taken with the effect related, the total abolition seems to have been the only course left to the Provisional Government.

Before the end of November, the Neapolitan forces in Sicily amounted to 17,000 men, with a proportionate naval force. The disposition of the inhabitants nevertheless remained unaltered. Fresh negotiations were opened with the Provisional Government, through the medium of the English and French consuls, on the basis of the Crown being left to the King, but the Parliament, Administration, and Army to be exclusively Sicilian; but even this did not satisfy the President, who objected to the union of the two Crowns, and deemed the rest an insufficient guarantee for the public welfare. Discussions of considerable length and interest followed, as might have been expected, the promulgation of the foregoing offer. Before the end of the year a crisis in the Government took place, and ministers resigned, but, as it was found impossible to find substitutes for them, they resumed their places. A variety of documents were published, giving detailed lists of the barbarities committed at Messina by the royalist troops, which drew forth indignant denials from their commander, Prince Satriano.

That much cruelty was shown on both sides is pretty evident, but it is not quite so clear whether anything else could have been expected under the circumstances, or whether any instance can be adduced of successful attacks by the popular party at one time, followed by such measures as bombardment by their antagonists, also effectual, having been got through without many scenes of atrocity and violence. In February, the King sent his ultimatum to the Provisional Government. The army, as anticipated, proved the great difficulty, but on this point the monarch was firm; and, after considering the arguments adduced in favour of his views, it is hardly possible to deny that they were correct. He consented to an amnesty to all except forty-four who were exempted by name, but representations having been made to His Majesty, that amongst that number were many of the very persons to whom the treaty was to be submitted for acceptance, the exceptions were annulled. The treaty also contained a clause annulling all Acts of Parliament passed in 1848, a measure doubtless, in many instances inconvenient, and even sometimes prejudicial. Founding his refusal on this latter clause, Prince Butera at first declined laying the treaty before Parliament.

The delay which occurred in sending some reply to the King's communication seemed so unreasonable, that the two admirals gave formal notice of the cessation of the armistice. With a view to avail themselves of every chance, and to save the island, if possible, from a repetition of the bloody scenes which it had lately witnessed, the ministers of England and France went in person to Palermo, where they made such alterations in the paper sent to Prince Butera as removed his

objections to lay them before the chambers, where the offers were rejected by acclamation. Mr. Temple consequently, along with Monsieur de Rayneval, left Palermo on the 26th of March, Prince Cariatì having forwarded on the 22nd a note informing them that, in consequence of the rejection of the terms offered by the King, the Gulf and port of Palermo would be considered from the 1st of April as in a state of blockade, and requesting them to give the necessary warning to residents belonging to their respective nations of the renewal of hostilities. The combined fleets left Palermo at the end of March, Admiral Parker having despatched steam vessels to the principal maritime towns for the protection of British life and property. Having received an account written by a relative on the spot, I subjoin an extract from his letter dated about eight days before the armistice ended, and posted at Naples on the 2nd April.

"Messina swarmed with troops of all arms. 30,000 men (Neapolitans) are in readiness to act. The soldiers look well, walk well, are perfectly dressed, smoke bad tobacco with a peaceful air, and probably will do anything, except perhaps fight. The town has suffered much in parts. Many of the palaces on the Marina are propped up. Near the Citadel there was hard fighting, 300 Swiss, the exception in the way of fighting, having been killed there. The suburb above the town has been gutted along an extent of two miles, and is now uninhabited. Two Neapolitan vessels of war, and some French and English ships, were in the harbour, with many Neapolitan steamers, ready to convey the troops to the different points of attack. Messina is the only town which Naples

holds in the island. At Palermo we found the combined fleets, with the English and French Ministers from Naples. I never saw such excitement. The streets were crowded in all parts. As we went through the streets, thousands in every direction waved hats and handkerchiefs, crying out, "Guerra, guerra, ed ora." It was as exciting as a bull-fight, and the numbers joining in the cries much larger. They were well armed with percussion guns, and were busy landing cannon at the mole. They have thrown up several batteries in different places, though not worth much. Many labourers had been working in the trenches, and ladies had set the example, the Duchess of Monte Leone having used her spade and basket."

So ended the month of March. The blockade, as officially notified, was at once commenced. By degrees, the islanders began to see the hopelessness of their case; one place after another came into the terms proposed; and the Neapolitan flag replaced that of the Sicilian Republic. No relaxation was made during the months of April and May in the strictness with which the blockade was enforced; and by the end of the latter month the rebellion terminated, by the complete surrender of all the strongholds to the King's troops. In the beginning of June the official organ announced the termination of the blockade, and the nominal return of the Sicilians to their allegiance.

CHAPTER III.

CHARYBDIS.—REGGIO.—MANUFACTURE OF SILK.—BOVA.—SCYLLA.—DEPARTURE FROM MESSINA.—ALI.—LATOJANNI.

SEPTEMBER 5TH. As the day was fine, and the wind fair, we determined on visiting Reggio, eight miles distant, on the opposite shore of Calabria; we embarked accordingly in a small boat, and soon found ourselves in the middle of the terrible and far-famed Charybdis. It is now called Galofaro, but under ordinary circumstances is nothing more than an eddy and slight surf caused by the meeting of the main and lateral currents. It is not always in the same situation, shifting according to the state of the tide,* but it is generally most violent when opposite the angle of the Braccio di S. Rainiere, on which the lighthouse stands. In passing through it the boat was turned considerably from its course, so that for a moment we lost the wind out of the sail, and were obliged to use the oars. Captain Smyth mentions having seen large ships occasionally whirled round upon its surface, but adds, that by using due caution, very little danger or inconvenience is to be apprehended: that it might have been, to the undecked

* The tide in the straits of Messina is very regular, running each way for six hours, at the rate of from two to five miles an hour, but only rising a few inches.

boats of the ancients, more deservedly an object of fear than at present, is not improbable, though we cannot agree with those who would attribute the violence of the current in former times to the extreme narrowness of the straits. That the sea burst through the isthmus, and divided Italy from Sicily, or that the straits were ever more confined than they now are, it is difficult to believe, though Reggio, by the Greeks called 'Ρήγιον, is said to derive its name from that circumstance,—ρήγω, in the Ionic dialect, meaning to break or burst through. Virgil,* Silius Italicus, Ovid,† Claudian,‡ and many other poets, allude to the tradition, but beyond that there is no ground whatever for imagining that such was really the case. On the contrary, appearances would lead one to think that the channel was originally wider, a supposition countenanced by the story quoted by Diodorus Siculus from Hesiod, that the sea was formerly broader, until Orion raised up the promontory of Pelorus, and built upon it a temple to Neptune§. But to return to Charybdis. Both Ulysses|| and Æneas¶ were warned to be on their guard against this poetical bugbear, and were we to believe the tales related by Buffon and others of the fatal consequences of approaching within its influence, we should believe the danger to be still equally great, and acquit Virgil of exaggeration, when he speaks of its "lashing the stars with its waves." But, unfortunately, so far from drawing vessels into its vortex, and swallowing them up, it is found to repel and drive to a distance

* Æn. iii. 14.

§ Lib. iv. c. 4.

† Met. xvi.

|| Hom. Od. xii. 73.

‡ De Rap. Pros. i.

¶ Æn. iii. 420.

any light bodies which may be thrown on its surface. The story of Colas the diver is well known, and we cease to wonder at the extravagant conceits of the ancients, when we turn to the romantic, but by no means equally amusing, nonsense of modern travellers.

In an hour and a quarter we reached Reggio, and were carried before the commandant, who examined our passports, and then told us we were at liberty to proceed wherever we wished. The town has a most melancholy and ruinous appearance, many of the houses being cracked and split in every direction, while the walls of others lie in confused heaps on the ground, precisely as they were left by the earthquake of 1783. In the principal street, called the Corso Borbonico, but few of the houses have been raised above the first story, and the squalid misery pervading the narrow lanes of the city beggars all description. The architecture of the cathedral is Gothic, but there is nothing worthy of remark about it, and the citadel is in a ruinous state, though part of it is used as a prison. We ascended one of the remaining towers, and were gratified by a most extensive view of the straits, and the opposite shores of Sicily. Messina, with the groves and vineyards surrounding it, the mountains rising behind, and to the left, *Ætna*, in unclouded majesty, towering above all other things, formed a scene as varied as it was beautiful. The environs of Reggio, especially towards the south, are highly cultivated, and abound with every kind of fruit and vegetable: the gardens are divided by hedges of pomegranates, while oranges, citrons, and lemons, may be seen growing beneath the shade of mulberry and palm trees. The dates from the latter seldom

come to maturity, most of them falling off before they are ripe. The soil in the neighbourhood is formed of strata of diluvial sand, gravel, and mud, in some spots rising above each other with so much regularity as to resemble steps.

Considerable numbers of the peasantry are employed in the management of silk-worms, the houses for which purpose may be observed at each side of the road. The windows are long and narrow, too much air being considered prejudicial to the insects in their first state, and they are closed completely, and slow fires lighted in the houses, when the eggs are on the point of being hatched. As soon as this operation has taken place, the worms are placed on shelves, formed of reeds, and fed with mulberry leaves ; those from the black mulberry are preferred, from the circumstance of its coming into leaf late in the season, at which period the worms are not so liable to be destroyed by any vicissitude of weather, as they would be were they hatched at the time that the white mulberry shows its leaves. It is also maintained by the Reggians that worms fed on the black mulberry produce silk which is heavier, and of a superior quality to any other ; but the silk-workers of Bergamo, and the south of France, are of a contrary opinion ; and the question seems to have been set at rest by the experiments made at Montpellier, the result of which has been a decided preference for the leaves of the white mulberry. In case of a blight attacking the mulberry trees, other leaves have been tried as food for the worms, and bramble-tops have been found the best substitute. The eggs are principally imported from Leghorn, but frequent changes in the breed are necessary to prevent the deterioration of the silk. The lizards, which

cannot without great difficulty be kept out of the houses, frequently do considerable damage by running about on the shelves appropriated to the worms ; consequently the black snakes so often seen in the south of Italy, and which live in a great measure on those little animals, are protected by the people as religiously as was the ibis by the Egyptians. The cocoons, when gathered, are carried to public cauldrons at Reggio, where a duty is paid for steaming and winding them off. A second tax, of so much per pound, is required after this is completed, the government taking care that the silk should be weighed while it is wet and heavy ; and as if this were not enough, two carlini a year are exacted for every mulberry tree. There is certainly, in the fiscal regulations of the Neapolitan government, something which reminds one forcibly of the fable of the man with the goose that laid golden eggs ; in their eagerness to secure a present advantage, they annihilate the means of future production. An amusing instance of the superstition of the sailors employed in transporting the silk is mentioned by Mr. Swinburne :* they lay aside a bale to secure the good offices of their patron saint, but should any rain fall to injure the cargo, he is supposed not to have fulfilled his part of the engagement, and forfeits all claim to his portion.

Not having been aware of the distance, we had had some intention of visiting Bova, a town situated among the mountains behind Reggio, but finding that, by the nearest road, it was upwards of twenty miles off, we were obliged to

* Travels in the Two Sicilies.

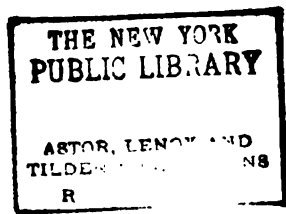


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abandon the idea. The trip is one which would be more especially interesting to any person taking an interest in the investigation of languages. That of Bova is described by Mr. Swinburne as a dialect of Albanian, abounding with words borrowed from Greek, Latin, Slavonian, Italian, French, German, and, what is by far the most extraordinary, with many English terms, employed in their native signification. The rites of the Greek church are adhered to there, as in many parts of the province of Cosenza, and the secular clergy are consequently permitted to marry.

When evening was approaching, we prepared to return to Sicily, and went down to the beach. Whether the current was too strong, which was the reason assigned, or the men too lazy to row against it, did not appear, but a pair of oxen were procured to tow us along the shore till we arrived opposite Messina. A bucket, filled with sand, was suspended to the bar by which the oxen drew, the precise object of which we could not understand, nor could we elicit any other explanation from the driver, than that it was the custom to do so. While proceeding in this way, the Ave Maria bell sounded from the shore, when the sailors uncovered their heads, crossed themselves, and muttered a short prayer : the connexion of the memorable " Sicilian Vespers " with that bell was too obvious not to occur to us. At length, after coasting in the manner described for an hour and a half, we reached the proposed point, and stood across the straits with a breeze which soon wafted us back to Messina.

September 6th.—We were occupied this morning in negotiations with proprietors of mules, with one of whom, after

much discussion and argument, we concluded an agreement for the number of animals which we required for the tour of the island, at the rate of eight tari for every day on which we might travel, and five for days of rest. We were to be accompanied by two muleteers and a boy, the buonamano to whom is optional, depending of course on their conduct, but, when that is satisfactory, it is usual to give them each two tari a day. Some persons prefer hiring mules only from one great town to another, but by so doing they subject themselves to inconvenience from the constant change, without, perhaps, after all, saving money, as they are obliged to pay for the days necessary for the return home of the animals. We had brought English saddles with us from Naples, a precaution which all travellers who value their ease or comfort would do well to adopt : those of the country being barbarously ill made.

As there are but few roads in Sicily fitted for carriages, and in most parts of the island none whatever, the choice of a conveyance lies between mules, and a lettiga. This strange vehicle, containing two persons, who sit opposite to each other, and resembling the body of a small carriage or *fly*, is placed between poles, like a sedan-chair, and borne by two mules, the leading one of which is furnished with a set of bells that make the whole neighbourhood resound. The outside is ornamented with pictures of the Virgin Mary, or of the souls in purgatory, but the lining is generally old and dirty. It is always accompanied by two muleteers, one riding at the head of the cavalcade, the other walking by the side with a long pole, having a spike at the end to goad the

mules.* Such a conveyance may suit females or effeminate gentlemen, but the motion is disagreeable and causes drowsiness, in addition to which the country cannot be seen to advantage. On the other hand, creeping along at a foot's pace, for eight or ten hours every day, on a mule, exposed to a scorching sun, does not sound very inviting, but one soon becomes habituated to it; the fatigue, too, is trifling if one rides with short stirrups, and certainly more conducive to health than the confinement of a lettiga.

In the evening we again got a boat, and sailed up the straits to visit Scylla. As we passed on, a few of the *pesce spada*† appeared in the water near us, their large dorsal fin projecting above the surface. During the spring they are caught in great numbers, the fishery at that time producing a considerable emolument to many of the inhabitants of Messina. They are taken with a harpoon in the following manner: a large boat, with a high mast, on which a man is stationed, goes out attended by several long boats of another description, called *luntra*. When the man on the look-out sees the fish, he gives notice to one of the smaller boats, calling out "Dda! dda! hu!" and the pursuit commences. The fish, when struck by the harpoon, dives immediately, and the head of the instrument, quitting the shaft, carries with it a long line by which the animal is gradually tired out. They vary in length from six to thirteen or fourteen feet, and in weight, from seventy up to two hundred pounds. A long bone projects from the upper jaw,

* In the view of the Temple of Juno Lucina, at Girgenti, a correct representation of a lettiga is given.

† *Xiphias gladius*.

like a broad two-edged sword about a yard in length, whence the name *pesce spada*. The flesh of this fish is firm, but rather insipid; when cut into slices and fried, it resembles veal.

A traveller who carries with him an imagination heated by the beautiful, but, in a great measure, unfounded tales of Homer and Virgil, will find himself still more at a loss to reconcile the relative position of Scylla and Charybdis with his preconceived notions, than he was to account for the actual appearance of the latter. He will call to mind the miraculous escape of the Argonauts, the advice of Circe to Ulysses when she tells him that these horrors are

Πλήσιον ἀλλήλων, καὶ κέν διοϊστεύσεας,

“so near that he might throw a dart from one to the other;” that the priest of Apollo told Æneas it would be better to sail round by the southern promontory of Sicily, than incur such imminent danger; and that Tibullus calls the passage of these straits, “skirting, on either side, the threshold of death.” If he turn to the moderns it is only the same story repeated; Milton* and Gualtier de Chatillon† have conspired to persuade him, that threading these watery mazes is like attempting to pass a steel between two loadstones. How then will he be disappointed, when he discovers that Scylla and Charybdis are upwards of ten miles apart, and not even in sight of each other!

* Paradise Lost, ii. 1010.

† “Nescis, heu! perdite, nescis
Quem fugias, hostes incurris dum fugis hostem:
Incidis in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charybdem.”—ALEXANDREID. I.

to Ormond's Sicily. p. 56.

57

It might be expected that Scylla and
Charybdis should be more distant from
each other now than in Homer's time.

There is a tradition that Italy and
Sicily once joined; and geologists report
that such must have been the case.

The flow of water between the island
and the continent would gradually
enlarge the breach, and as Charybdis
is on the Sicilian side, and Scylla
on the Italian they would thus become
more distant.

But Lempriere says that the exact
location of Charybdis is not

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Night had come on before we left Scylla. The air was so still, that when near Messina we distinctly heard the barking of dogs and other sounds from the Calabrian shore, though the Straits, at that point, are six miles and a half wide. They narrow considerably towards the north, so that from the Faro point, or Pelorus, to the nearest part of Italy, is only two miles and fifty-four yards. Timoleon, with his whole army, passed there in small boats, their horses swimming by the side; and, after him, Earl Roger and the Normans performed the same exploit.

September 7.—We had intended starting early, but there was so much packing, and so many things to be done, which had not been thought of before, that it was near ten o'clock when our cavalcade moved from the gate of the Leone d'Oro. To travel with any degree of comfort in a country like Sicily, it is necessary not only to carry food, but the utensils to cook it in, which, with kettles, tea-pots, plates, cups, glasses, bottles, knives, and so forth, make a formidable addition to the usual equipage of travellers. Aware of the inconvenience of being compelled to trust for shelter to the wretched inns of the country, we had brought a tent with us, and had thus the power of halting when and wherever we pleased. We had two horses and the same number of mules for ourselves and servant, and three mules to carry the baggage, tent, and cooking apparatus. To do us honour, the owner of the animals accompanied us as far as the city gate, and then, with a profusion of good wishes, left us to pursue our journey.

The environs of Messina, towards the south, are extremely pretty, abounding with country-houses, gardens, and vineyards;

and the scenery would be perfect, were there a little more wood on the sides of the hills. The road crosses a plain called "Il Dromo," where the Agonalian games were formerly celebrated, after which it approaches the sea, between which and the mountains there is barely a passage left. The view, consequently, became extremely contracted, little remaining to divert our thoughts from the dust and heat, to which we had yet to become inured. We found too that the fable of Stesichorus was likely to be reversed in our case: guiding the mules was out of the question; it was ourselves, and not they, who were deprived of liberty.

We passed Contessa, Bordonaro, Larderia, and some other villages, the inhabitants of which gain their livelihood principally by the silk trade; and while stopping for a few minutes near Scaletta, found the thermometer in the shade up to ninety-four degrees of Fahrenheit. A short distance beyond that is Capo Grosso, which, with Capo dell' Armi,* on the opposite shore of Calabria, is considered the termination of the Faro or Straits of Messina.

When we had gone sixteen miles we quitted the road, and

* "This cape is under a very remarkable hill, called Pentedattilo, with five peaks resembling a hand. About half-way up it there is a castle, which, in the beginning of the last century, was the scene of a feud that reminds one of the atrocities of the dark ages. A daughter of Alberti, Baron of Pentedattilo, was in love with an enemy of her father's, named Montebello, and, anticipating probably a very different result, foolishly consented to admit him into the castle at night. He was followed by a band of ruffians, who commenced an indiscriminate slaughter, in which the unfortunate girl and her whole family perished. The stains of blood still remain on the walls of the room in which the Baron was murdered."—CAPT. SMYTH.

turned up a very steep and rugged path, leading towards Ali, a town on the declivity of Monte Scuderi. As it was then too late to think of ascending the mountain, our only care was to find a convenient place for pitching the tent, which we did at length in a stubble surrounded by olive and fig-trees. A more beautiful spot than that which we selected can hardly be conceived: about 1000 feet below us was the sea, blue, and as smooth as the surface of a mirror, with the shore winding along towards Messina; beyond it appeared the rugged outline of the Calabrian mountains; Monte Scuderi rose behind us; while *Ætna*, the principal feature in almost every Sicilian landscape, closed the horizon on our right.

Our attention was then drawn to another but not less pleasing object, our dinner, which on this, as on most other days of country travelling, consisted of macaroni, which we always got good, and fowls, the latter too often having but just ceased to exist. Our dessert, in the present instance, was easily furnished, as there was a vineyard close to us, and the trees near us were covered with purple figs. Our arrangements for the night were soon made. We could not get straw, and only had to make the best of good cloaks, which, though tolerably thick, did not quite conceal the roughness of the ground. The air was charged, to an unpleasant degree, with the perfume of wild thyme and other aromatic herbs, and swarmed with insects. Those on the ground were hardly less numerous. The heat after dark was suffocating, the thermometer at midnight standing at ninety degrees. The mules had been tied to the trees, and the muleteers, rolled in their black cloaks, slept near them.

September 8.—Mr. Odell set off, with a peasant as guide, to ascend Monte Scuderi, the highest of the Neptunian range, in search of a cavern mentioned by Captain Smyth, but returned somewhat late, having failed in his researches. I strolled into the town of Ali, an antiquated and dreary place, with a very large church and population of beggars; and, after an early dinner, we packed up, and resumed our journey. We crossed the dry beds of several *fiumare*;* among the rest the Fiume di Nisi, supposed to have been the Chrysothoas, from the banks of which Eurylochus, disregarding the admonition of Ulysses, stole the oxen of Apollo. There are mines of silver, copper, and lead in this neighbourhood, but they have not been worked for many years. We soon after passed Sant' Alessio, an abrupt rock projecting into the sea, with a fort on the summit, a post of some importance during the occupation of Sicily by the English.

We had intended proceeding to Giardini, but night came on, and we were unwilling to pass, in the dark, over any of this beautiful part of the country. We, therefore, stopped at a small village called Latojanni, where we were fortunate enough to find an inn, cleaner than we had expected, and beds tolerably free from the usual accompaniment.

* "Fiumara" is the term applied by the Sicilians to all small streams. They are generally dry in summer, but in winter, or when the snows are melting, they become furious torrents, often impassable, carrying along with them a prodigious quantity of earth and stones, and spreading in many cases to the breadth of half a mile. No attempt has ever been made to confine their channels, or to prevent the injury caused by the deposit of sand and shingle.

CHAPTER IV.

TAUROMENIUM.—DESCRIPTION OF AN ANCIENT THEATRE.—RUINS OF
TAORMINA CONVENT.—NAXOS.—CASTAGNO DEI CENTO CAVALLI.—
NICOLOSI.

SEPTEMBER 9.—Before sunrise we were again in motion, anxious to have as much time as possible for seeing Taormina, from which we were only four miles distant. The sea, in the little coves under the ancient promontory of Taurus, was as clear as crystal, and the rocks of red and white marble have been worn into innumerable arches and caverns. The road, cut out of the cliff, winds along at some distance above the beach, but far below the ruins of Tauromenium. We rounded the point, and soon reached the inn at Giardini.

This village is surrounded by gardens, vineyards, and olive plantations, and stands on a small bay two miles below Taormina, the ascent to which is by a winding road extremely steep and rugged. We found the inhabitants of both places decked out in their gayest attire, and a band of wretched musicians parading the streets in honour of S. Pancrazio, their patron saint, whose *festa* this was, and whose statue, once part of that of a centaur, but now surmounted by a copper nimbus, may be seen in the principal street. Every half-hour a *feu-de-joie* was fired from scores of little iron pateraroes, and the bells of all the

churches in the town commencing a peal at the same moment, in the most rapid and furious manner, produced altogether a din little suited to the celebration of a Christian festival. This is the common practice throughout Italy and Sicily, and is not one of the least strange among the many methods that have been devised for honouring the gods of those countries. While on the subject of odd religious observances, I may here mention that at Malta, during Passion Week, the people sit at their doors shaking a small box containing pebbles, the clatter of which resembles that caused by the little machines used in England to frighten crows from a corn-field; this they call *grinding Judas's bones*: and a very similar custom prevails amongst the Jews of the East, where, as I am informed by my friend Mr. Curzon, who has been much amongst them, they are in the habit, on certain occasions, of beating stones with hammers, which they designate as beating Haman.

The present town of Taormina is but a poor remnant of its former grandeur: it contains between 3000 and 4000 inhabitants, and occupies a narrow platform of ground above a precipice facing the sea.

The ancient Tauromenium, by the Carthaginians called Tur, was extensive, comprehending within its walls all the brow of the hill where the theatre is situated. It was founded by the people of Naxos, after the destruction of their own city, and, though it never made much figure in history, must at one time have been a place of considerable importance. It was celebrated for its wine, which in some measure still retains its reputation, and was the birth-place of Timæus the historian.

Much discussion has arisen as to the period at which the

theatre was erected, but the more received opinion seems to be, that it is not of an earlier date than the commencement of the Roman Empire. Before proceeding to describe its magnificent remains, it may not perhaps be superfluous to give a slight sketch of the form and disposition of this species of building, to which so much importance was attached by the ancients.

That part of the theatre appropriated to the audience, and called the *coilon* or *cavea*, formed either a semi-ellipse or a semicircle, generally the former, of which the *proscenion* or stage was the chord. Immediately in front of the latter was the *orchestra*, forming an oblong parallelogram raised a little out of the *conistra* or pit, and intended for the accommodation of the musicians and chorus. Among the Romans it had a different destination, being reserved for the emperor, senators, vestal virgins, and other persons of high rank. The *conistra*, which bore no proportion to the pit of our theatres, was semi-circular, and surrounded by rows of stone benches, generally twenty-four in number, gradually receding and rising above one another like steps. These were divided horizontally into three sets of eight benches in each,* by corridors or landing places, about four feet wide, called *diazomata*, which followed the sweep of the benches, and served as a means of communication between one part of the *coilon* and another, at the

* They were not thus equally divided in all cases: in the theatre at Morviedro, the ancient Saguntum, there are seven benches in the lower division, six in the middle, and ten in the upper; and in the theatre which has occasioned these remarks, there are supposed to have been twelve benches in each of the lower divisions, and nine in the remaining one.

same time that they constituted lines of demarcation between the different ranks of spectators. The entrance and egress of persons were further facilitated by stairs, which radiated from the *conistra*, and crossing the rows of benches from the bottom to the top, terminated at the *vomitoria*, or doors communicating with the porticoes, that formed a crescent round the upper part of the theatre, and afforded shelter to the audience in case of rain, as well as a passage out of the building. The whole extent of the benches was thus divided into eight or nine figures, resembling wedges, thence termed *cunei* by the Romans. Above all was the *cercys*, a covered portico for the women, who were, in this manner, protected from the sun; an arrangement well calculated to preserve their complexions from injury, but most distracting to the attention of the remainder of the audience, who could not see their fair friends without turning their backs on the performance. A distinct place was allotted to females who had led irregular lives, their presence, among the virtuous portion of their sex, not being considered desirable.

The benches nearest the *conistra* were considered, at Rome, the most fashionable, and were those reserved for the knights; but in Greece, the middle division, called *bouleuticon*, between the eighth and seventeenth rows, was that appropriated to the magistrates and other persons of distinction. The remaining tiers, called *ephebicon*, were for the citizens who had passed their eighteenth year. The height of each of these rows of benches was about thirteen inches, their breadth about twenty-two, but the back part of their upper surface was sunk two or three inches below the level of the

front, in order that the persons sitting on the latter might not be inconvenienced by the feet of those above them. The seats were sometimes numbered, as may be observed in the amphitheatre at Nismes, and the remains of leather cushions were found in the theatre at Pompeii.

This part of the building was generally open to the sky;* as a protection, therefore, from the sun, an awning, supported by ropes, and which was sometimes painted to imitate the heavens, and ornamented with the signs of the zodiac, or other appropriate devices, was drawn across; but as this afforded no security against the rain, the play was interrupted in the event of a sudden storm, and the audience dispersed. The Athenians used to bring cloaks to protect themselves from the weather, and a kind of parasol or umbrella, called *sciadion*, to keep off the sun.

Of the parts of the building appropriated to the actors, the *proscenion* or stage was the principal. It was raised several feet above the orchestra, and ten or eleven above the *conistra*, and upon it stood an altar dedicated to Apollo: its situation with regard to the *coilon* has been already described. To a modern play-goer the most striking peculiarity in this part of an ancient theatre is its shallowness, which is such, that it is impossible to conceive how any appearance of distance or perspective could have been produced. The *proscenion* of the theatre of Bacchus, at Athens, was eighteen feet deep; that of the theatre at Saguntum was nineteen feet three

* Not always: the theatre of Regilla, at Athens, and the Odeum of Pericles, as well as other music theatres, had roofs.

inches, but the stage in the theatre of Tauromenium was not quite so contracted, being twenty-nine feet deep, and 130 wide. The *scena*,* which rose at the back of the *proscenion*, was an architectural screen, terminating the body of the house, and decorated with columns and statues; it formed an integral part of the building, and had a central and two or more lateral entrances.

How much of the theatre was included under the term *parascenion*, does not appear to be very well ascertained, but there can be no doubt that it was applied to the space both before and behind the *scena*. Besides this there were retiring rooms for the actors, and other accessories of which a minute enumeration would be unnecessary.† Contrary to modern usage, the curtain, where one was used, was let down into a hollow in the front of the stage when the performance was about to commence.

The theatres were usually supported at the expense of the state, and it was, at one period, a common complaint at Athens, that more money was squandered on plays and games than in carrying on the war. Dramatic exhibitions were not the only purpose to which they were applied, for religious festivals, as

* The term *scena* is not unusually applied to the *stage*, but such was not its earlier signification, and confusion has arisen from using it indifferently.

† There are various subordinate parts of a theatre which I have not thought it necessary to mention. Some are only subdivisions of the larger parts, and the precise nature of all is not understood. There is hardly a subject on which so much diversity of opinion prevails, or of which so little is clearly known by antiquaries, as that of theatres.

well as public assemblies, were often held in them : the suffrages of the people of Athens were taken in the theatre of Bacchus ; and during the uproar at Ephesus, raised by Demetrius the silversmith against St. Paul, it was in the theatre that the town-clerk harangued the people.*

It is not a little singular that this form of theatre, so much more beautiful than any other, and so infinitely better calculated for seeing and hearing, and for *being seen*, should never, but with one solitary exception,† have been adopted in modern times. It would also offer the additional advantages of cheapness in construction, and of affording, in proportion to its size, fully thrice the accommodation.

The theatre of Tauromenium stands on the brow of a precipice, facing the south, 850 feet above the sea, and occupies a semicircular cavity in the rock, which has been taken advantage of for the curvature of the seats. This contrivance may almost be considered as characteristic of ancient theatres, for where the nature of the situation admitted of it, such is invariably found to be the case, nor is it the least merit of the architects of former times, that they compelled nature to furnish the foundations for their gigantic edifices.‡ Another circumstance which may be remarked in this theatre, in common with many others, is that of its commanding a view of the sea: at Syracuse, Ægesta, Tyndaris, at Athens, Argos, and at

* Acts, xix. 29-41.

† The Olympic theatre at Vicenza, erected from the designs of Palladio.

‡ "Fundamentorum autem, si in montibus fuerit, facilius erit ratio."—

VITRUV. c. 3.

Sparta, at Halicarnassus, Telmessus, Alexandria Troas, at Saguntum, in short, in every theatre from Spain to the extremity of Asia Minor, where it was compatible with the situation, these two features may be observed. They thus formed part of one stupendous design, nor could anything possibly be grander than one of these prodigious buildings, containing its tens of thousands of spectators, with the mountains towering above, and the sea stretching, in boundless perspective, beyond the *scena*.

The ornaments of this theatre were of the Corinthian order; but, with the exception of a few fragments of marble columns and cornices found in the rubbish, and now built into the wall, or lying on the ground, they are all gone: a Duke of Sto. Stefano carried off the statues and everything else of value that remained, enriching his private residence at the expense of one of the noblest monuments of antiquity. The walls are built partly of bricks, and partly of small stones, and, as well as the seats, were cased with marble. Of the seats themselves there are now no vestiges, but the space they once occupied forms rather more than a semicircle, and is surmounted by a wall pierced by eight *vomitoria*, and exhibiting a row of niches, by some supposed to have contained *echea*,* but more probably destined to receive statues. The *scena* is still tolerably perfect, more so than in any other ancient theatre, and has three doors; a large one in the centre, and two smaller ones. There are also eight niches for statues, and

* Brazen or copper vases which increased the sound, and rendered more audible the voices of the actors.

the marks remain on the wall where columns were formerly placed. At each extremity of the *scena* there is a large square chamber with a vaulted roof, but whether intended for the use of the actors or the audience cannot now be ascertained. In front of the *proscenion* there is a subterranean passage, partly open, that might have been used as the *bronteion*, a place where brazen vessels full of stones were kept to imitate thunder.

Notwithstanding the great size* and dilapidated state of the building, so perfect is the conveyance of sound, that a person standing on the *proscenion*, and speaking in his natural tone of voice, is heard distinctly in the *vomitoria* above the seats ; a proof that the principles of acoustics were better understood formerly, or more attended to, than they now are.

This theatre, supposed, but perhaps without due consideration, to have been capable of containing 40,000 spectators, is overhung by the boldest and most precipitous rocks, crowned by an old Saracenic castle, above which, on a seemingly inaccessible peak, and at an elevation of 1600 feet from the level of the sea, stands the village of Mola. The Straits of Messina, the distant mountains of Calabria, and the Ionian sea, are on one side ; while on the other, *Ætna*, with its base covered by luxuriant vegetation, and studded with villages, its broad belt of forest, and smoking summit, forms a background the majesty of which cannot be described.

* The exterior portico, following the curve, measures 599 feet: the foundations only remain.

The other remains of antiquity at Taormina consist of one wall of a *naumachia*, upwards of 350 feet in length; some reservoirs, resembling those near Baiæ, by which it was supplied with water; sepulchres, an aqueduct, and other ruins to which no precise object can be assigned. One of the reservoirs is in a very perfect state; it is divided by a row of massive pillars, and lighted by semicircular windows near the roof: the inside is lined with the *opus signinum*, a very hard cement, composed of pounded pottery blended with fine mortar. These things may be interesting only to an antiquary, but any person with the smallest taste for fine scenery would be gratified by a visit to the Capuchin convent, the secluded grounds of which are indeed most beautiful. Could anything induce aught besides indolence or enthusiasm to give up society and lead a life of solitude,—“the world forgetting, by the world forgot,”—it would be such a retirement as this. But experience has shown full often that happiness is not to be secured by abandoning our social duties; it is not to be sought amidst rocks and deserts; to increase, we must dispense it; nor can we, in the evening of our days, look back with satisfaction, or forward with confidence, but with the assurance on our minds that we have “fought a good fight.”

Monastic institutions were once the cradle of religion and learning, but they have long ceased to be so; genius and sanctity have deserted their precincts to make way for ignorance and disappointed ambition.

The site of Naxos, from which Tauromenium was originally peopled, is at no great distance on the banks of the Alcantara, once the Onobala, but neither of the town, nor of its celebrated

temple of Venus Libertina, or sanctuary of Apollo Arcagetes, are there now any existing vestiges : the elder Dionysius began the work of destruction, and time did the rest. The spot is now marked by an old baronial castle. This town probably derived its appellation from the island in the Ægean Sea, as it was a favourite custom of the expatriated Greeks, to preserve, in the name of their new settlements, a memorial of the country they had left, as if, by this illusion, they could soften the recollection of their being in a foreign land. This lingering attachment to their former homes and habits, manifested by all colonists, goes far to contravene the opinion that the love of our country is the result merely of education, and not natural to man. Some men there may be, who have so smothered nature in their breasts, as to be proof against such yearnings, and who think with Brutus, that there is no evil in banishment, since those who undergo it cannot be prevented from carrying their virtue along with them ; but the opinion is, I think, a forced one, and I doubt whether the regicide Ludlow would have inscribed above his door, "Omne solum forti patria," had he been at liberty to return to England. At some distance above the site of Naxos is Francavilla, celebrated for a desperate and bloody battle between the Austrians and Spaniards, fought on the 1st of June, 1719, in which the former suffered a total defeat.

At length we were compelled, with regret, to leave Taormina, and descend to Giardini, from whence, in the evening, we continued our journey.

The Punto di Schiso, which projects into the sea near this, was formed by a very early stream of lava, Naxos, founded in

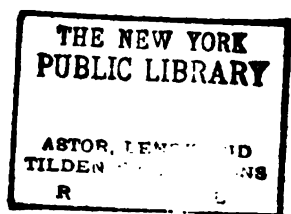


at Large & H. A. 184

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

Engraved by H. Jones & Smith, Dublin, 1849

W. Locke & Co.



the eighth century before Christ, having been built upon it. Its course must have extended nearly thirty miles in length. The Alcantara flows over other strata still more ancient. We soon passed this river, one of the few in Sicily crossed by a bridge, and entered upon the base of *Ætna*. Mascalì we left to the right, and, after riding eleven miles, reached Giarre. We had also passed the Fiume Freddo, a small brook discharging itself into the sea below the former town: though extremely cold, it never freezes, and its waters are said to be poisonous; we drank of them, however, without experiencing any bad effects.

Giarre is a small town consisting of one street, and the only remarkable object that we observed on our way to the inn, was a knight of Malta, with the cross on his breast. Raymond Dupuy or La Valletta would have been a good deal surprised could they have seen this fallen remnant of their once illustrious order, smoking cigars at the door of a caffè. Two or three of them may occasionally be seen sauntering along the streets at Malta, reminding one, by their appearance, rather of the quaint figures of old men that one sometimes sees on the stage, with gold-headed canes and buckles in their shoes, than of the warriors who repulsed Solyman II. and destroyed 30,000 of his men.

As we had expected nothing in the inn, we were not disappointed; the outside looked plausible enough, but had we not had our own tea-cups, we must have taken our evening meal out of the tin pot in which it was made. The dirt of the people was only equalled by their ugliness, and neither could be surpassed by anything that we had ever seen. All

this was matter of indifference to us, and we should have been content with our quarters could we have procured any rest. But between the singing of people under the windows, the bells of cattle passing in the street, the bites and buzzing of myriads of mosquitoes, the kicking of the mules in the stable below, and the barking of a pertinacious cur on the stairs, sleep was completely out of the question. At last, losing all patience, we went out in pursuit of the dog, and having caught him in an oven, inflicted summary vengeance on him for his mistimed vigilance. It was then past two o'clock, and having roused the rest of the party, the mules were in due time loaded, and we set off, just as day broke, and in the midst of a violent squall of wind and dust.

September 10.—Our course was straight up the mountain, and the track execrable : it had been worn by the constant tread of mules into a deep gully, so narrow that more than once we were brought to a stop by meeting droves of asses loaded with wine. The soil, where cut through by streams, appeared of an immense depth, and formed of pulverized ashes and decayed vegetable matter. Its fertility is astonishing, and it might vie, in cultivation, with the richest parts of Tuscany or Lombardy. As we ascended, the season seemed less advanced, and grapes, which at the base of the mountain were full-grown and ripe, were here green, and not much more than half their proper size. We passed one or two villages, and, in two hours after leaving Giarre, reached the Castagno dei cento cavalli.

This celebrated tree (if it were only *one*) derived its name from one of the queens of Arragon having taken shelter in its

hollow trunk, with her suite, consisting of a hundred horsemen. This, at least, is the story, but it is as improbable as that the tree ever formed a single stem, for no such number of persons could ever have found room in it. The circumference at a yard above the ground is 178 feet, and allowing a quarter of that amount for the diameter, the usual calculation in measuring trees, it would have formed a solid mass of timber upwards of forty-four feet thick,—a most startling supposition for any person unless of determined credulity. A public path divides the clump, but the house that formerly stood in the centre to contain the chesnuts no longer remains.

At no great distance from this there is another, and much finer, because unquestionably a single tree, called *la Nave*, sixty feet in circumference. It is hollowed through at the bottom, but unites higher up. Our breakfast was laid within the tree, where there would have been ample room for a more numerous party.

There are many more of these gigantic trees in the neighbourhood ; about a mile and a half higher up the mountain, one, called the *Castagno della Galea*, said to be seventy-six feet round. What their age may be it is difficult to conjecture, as there is no tradition respecting them ; but it cannot be less than 1000 years. They are the largest trees of the kind known. At Tortworth, in Gloucestershire, there is one fifty-two feet round, which is known to have stood there since 1150, and was, even at that time, so remarkable as to be called “the great chesnut of Tortworth.”

It would appear that, under favourable circumstances, trees attain a much greater age than is generally imagined :

Having satisfied our curiosity, and pronounced the Castagno dei cento cavalli to be a *joint stock company*, we continued our march along a road, if road it could be called, composed of loose rolling pieces of lava, the inconvenience of which was certainly not diminished by the fiery glow of the atmosphere. But comfort, as Lord Byron observed, is not to be expected by folks that go pleasuring.

We halted in the middle of the day at a small place called Zafarana, where we were fortunate enough to find, in the yard of a farm-house, an harbour completely sheltered from

the sun by a trellis, with vines trained over it, and with a cistern of excellent water in the centre. We were tempted to lie down, and were soon asleep on the ground, and, when dinner appeared, felt for a few minutes strangely indifferent. The same rough road, and succession of villages, vineyards, and streams of lava, continued after leaving our retreat, until, having ridden twenty-five miles, we reached Nicolosi, a small village, twelve miles from Catania,—looking down on the plains of the Læstrygones, now the Piano di Catania. The inhabitants are chiefly guides to *Ætna* and Monte Rosso. An easterly wind had been for some days prevalent, and the weather was thick, which determined us, unless an immediate change took place, to defer our ascent. We found a very small but comfortable inn, where the civility of the people made up for its deficiencies in other respects.

CHAPTER V.

LEAVE NICOLOSI.—ADERNO.—NUNNERIES.—REGALBUTO.—S. FILIPPO
D'ARGIRO.

SEPTEMBER 11.—We were up at day-break, roused by Antonio Gemmellaro, a name familiar to all who visit *Ætna*. As we had anticipated, the day was hazy, and we at last decided on making for the central part of the island, and visiting Castro-Giovanni, the ancient Enna. Our superfluous baggage was sent down to Catania, and, to the annoyance of the guides, who thought that once gone we should not return, we set forward.

We had hardly left Nicolosi, and crossed the plain of ashes below Monte Rosso, when Castro-Giovanni rose before us, occupying the table summit of a high mountain. It seemed so close that we could not easily persuade ourselves of its being still upwards of sixty miles off. The signs of cultivation and inhabitants rapidly disappeared, and we entered upon the most dreary and desolate region that we had yet seen. Vast streams of dark brown lava, with just enough of vegetation in the crevices to contrast with their dusky hue, and above them innumerable cones, whose thunders shook the mountain at remote periods, were the only objects that presented themselves to us. The demon of fire seemed to exercise undisputed sway

over all around, and we might have fancied ourselves transported to the shores of Phlegethon, had we not seen, several thousand feet below us, the plain of Catania, and the Hyblæan hills beyond. Some idea may be formed of the wild and forlorn aspect of this tract, when it is mentioned, that one of the torrents of lava that we rode over is four miles wide, and upwards of 100 feet deep: not a living being, nor even a blade of grass, enlivened its rugged surface; and nothing met the eye but an interminable succession of dark ridges, resembling, in every thing but their colour, the waves of the sea during a storm. It is almost unnecessary to add, that the path we were obliged to follow was the next thing to impassable. This great stream was caused by the eruption which destroyed Catania, and threw up Monte Rosso.

Towards evening we quitted this gloomy desert, and followed the high road. The first person that we met was a swine-herd, who, but for his having "two legs and no feathers," might have been taken for any other animal than a man. He had a shaggy black cloak over his head and shoulders, hide sandals fastened on by innumerable thongs, and the remainder of his dress consisted of goat-skins with the hair outside:

"The hairy side out and the fleshy side in,
'Tis pleasant and cool, said Bryan O'Linn."

He was seated by the road side, playing an inartificial and somewhat doleful ditty upon an instrument as uncouth as himself: it was a sort of bagpipe, but had no drone, and was supplied, *à l'Irlandaise*, with wind from an inflated pig-skin that he held under his left arm.

We passed through Biancavilla, and a few miles further came to Aderno, where there is an extensive nunnery. As we passed below its walls, some of the inmates appeared at the upper windows, looking through the bars of their prison; but were they all like those whom we saw, they might dispense with iron gratings, and trust to nature to repel intrusion. There is certainly no stronger antidote to pity than disgust, for though one cannot but know that the haggard appearance of these ancient vestals is, in too many instances, the result of the unnatural and miserable existence forced upon them by the avarice or cruel policy of relations, the more gentle feeling is, notwithstanding, absorbed in the repugnance excited by their shrivelled faces.

The tranquillity and "heavenly pensive contemplation," which we are apt to consider as inherent in, and peculiar to, a cloister, are unfortunately but too seldom found to shed their mild influence over those sepulchres¹ of the living, for experience has shown full often, that the mortifications and solitude to which their hapless inmates are condemned, are not the means designed by Providence to curb our jarring and rebellious passions. Solitude may restore serenity to the philosopher, or it may teach the man whose spirit adversity has beaten down, that, though all men are his enemies, he may be unto himself a friend; but few there are throughout our whole species whose minds have been so effectually disciplined, either by philosophy or misfortune, as to entitle them to expect relief from this severe, but salutary remedy. If we sometimes become impatient of the society even of those we love by living constantly with them and them only, how much sooner would

indifference ripen to disgust, when we found ourselves immured for ever with those whom our imagination could not but identify with our misfortunes. The jealousies and heart-burnings of our wayward nature acquire intensity in proportion as their sphere is contracted, and it is almost using the words of one of these victims of perverted piety to say, that the feuds and cabals of the world at large are as charity itself when compared with the rancour and animosity that pervade "a convent's solitary gloom." The retirement to which Petrarch and Zimmermann devoted themselves, and to which they sacrificed the more brilliant but deceitful fortune that might have been their's, was not such as this,—it was virtue labouring in silence and seclusion to promote the welfare of the whole human race. The sublime idea of passing our lives in an anticipated communion with the Deity, and in a total abstraction from all sublunary cares, is calculated to take a strong hold upon melancholy or enthusiastic minds, but, like other beautiful and impracticable theories, it must wait its completion till another and more perfect state of existence.

It is only by travelling over Ætna, that a person acquires a correct notion of its extent: from the spot where we entered upon the mountain, near Taormina, to the Giarretta, at which we quitted it, we had travelled fifty-seven miles from east to west, at the height of Nicolosi. Had we gone round by the base the distance would have been proportionably greater. The Giarretta bounds it to the south and west, but the lava has, in many places, flowed across and changed the course of the stream. The plain beyond the river is marshy and extremely malarious, and as it was dark before we reached it,

we were a little perplexed as to where we should pass the night. At length, when we had almost begun to despair of finding a dry spot, we came to a farm-house, in the yard of which we pitched our tent, but at the expense of blistering our hands, and breaking many of the pegs in attempting to drive them. We had abundance of straw, and might have enjoyed unbroken slumbers, had it not been for some pigs which invaded our territory in the middle of the night, and commenced an attack upon two melons that we had intended for the next morning's breakfast.

September 12.—We were now on the *stradone*, or high road from Catania to Palermo, a fact not unfrequently brought to our recollection, by the toll-bars and chains stretched across it, but it was a most agreeable change from the mountain. On the summit of a hill to the left we saw Centorbi, the ancient Centuripæ, a town where medals and camei have been discovered, more beautiful and in greater number than at any other place in the island, excepting, perhaps, Syracuse. *Segesta—*

Our ride of ten miles to Regalbuto was most uninteresting. The town, like the generality of those of its class, stands *very* inconveniently on ~~THE~~ TOP of a hill, as difficult of access as could be desired in the days when it was founded. It contained nothing to delay us. The streets swarmed with priests and idlers, amongst whom our arrival evidently created a sensation, and doubtless furnished subject of surmise and conversation for the remainder of the day.

The many various ways in which the natives pronounce and spell the name of the same place is extremely puzzling to a stranger: that of this town, for instance, was written

down for us in four different ways,—Regalbuto, Leramita, Lerabuta, and Regalmito: the first and second of these would certainly never be recognised as meaning the same place.

The view improved after leaving this town of many names, and in some parts was as picturesque as rugged and broken ground, totally destitute of trees, could make it. Any native of a northern climate will be much struck with this want of verdure, especially in autumn, when the little grass that ever did exist has been burned up by the summer's sun. The eye soon becomes weary of the dusky green of the olive plantations, and searches in vain over a brown and scorched country for the familiar green turf and forest trees. Probably to the scarcity of the latter is in some measure attributable the small number of birds that one sees, a circumstance, by the by, more than atoned for by the infinite variety and multitude of insects and reptiles. The modern name of Selinus is Terra de' Pulci, or the land of fleas, a term that might with propriety be applied to the entire country, reserving always to Sciacca the honour of being the spot where "the king of the fleas holds his court." The heat of the climate, added to the uncommonly dirty habits of the people, would explain why those animals should exist in such myriads in the towns, but in some places they appear indigenous to the soil, abounding nearly as much as in the most crowded habitations. But custom reconciles one to anything.

No people are afflicted with *hydrophobia* to a greater extent than the lower order of the Sicilians: they would sooner spend hours in torturing their ingenuity to devise means of freeing themselves from the persecution of the countless thousands who

infest them, than undergo the penance of a cloth and water: "l'umidità fa male" is their only reply when pressed upon the subject, and that they act up to that principle a person has ample opportunity of observing in their towns, where groups of both sexes may be seen on the steps of the doors, mutually exerting their skill on each other's heads. To no part of their persons have they so great a horror of applying water, for the purpose of ablution, as to their feet, for, independently of the dangerous consequences that might immediately ensue, it is considered to relax the sinews and occasion debility. Absurd and incredible as this prejudice may appear, it is most religiously believed and acted upon by the opera-dancers, not only here, but at Naples and elsewhere. Not the most sultry weather, nor the clearest and smoothest sea, can tempt the Sicilians to venture on such a thing as bathing; the sworn votaries of filth, they stand aloof, and wonder how strangers can be so frantic as to risk their lives in so wanton a manner.

The next stage was S. Filippo d'Argiro, the ancient Agyrium, where Diodorus Siculus, the great historian, was born. It is a poor, straggling town, built on the summit and declivity of a high hill, and contains nothing whatever of interest, not even an inn; but an old gentleman who saw us passing through the streets was kind enough to allow us the use of his house while we remained. A damsel belonging to the establishment was so obliging as to offer to leave her master and accompany us, to make herself useful in any capacity that we might desire; but, having already a very superior cook, and not being in want of a housemaid, we begged to decline the favour.

The country through which we proceeded was in no

respect different from what has already been described, the monotony of barren valleys and rugged hills being only occasionally relieved by some miserable hamlet, perched on a height better suited for the eyrie of an eagle than the habitation of human beings. Evening was approaching when we reached Leonforte, where we had intended remaining for the night, but the only inn was so extremely bad, and its only room, over a stable, so small and close, that we preferred going further, and trusting to the tent for shelter.

In descending into a deep valley below the town, we passed one of the public fountains erected by the government, and generally surmounted by a pompous inscription commemorating the monarch, by whose munificence his subjects were compelled to pay the expense of the work, and the senators under whose immediate auspices it was completed. This one had twenty-four spouts running into a large stone trough about fifty feet long, but, notwithstanding its great size, it was too small for the throng of men, mules, boys, and donkeys, who were pressing to it for water. Even in the most remote and unfrequented tracks the mules remember where the fountains are situated, and resolute must that traveller be, and well prepared with his goad, who intends to pursue his course without allowing his animal to drink. Pumps are unknown in Sicily, and, as there are but few private wells, the towns are generally supplied with water from these fountains, for which purpose a number of asses, carrying large earthen jars fitted into panniers, are in constant requisition. At the other side of the valley we pitched our tent.

September 13.—At an early hour we continued our ride

through a tract of country destitute of every kind of verdure, and having much the colour and appearance of dried mud. But the road was good, and, as we drew near the object of our journey, our heads became so full of mythological conceits, that we could think of nothing else. The climate seemed to have changed since leaving the coast, and some rain fell, which was the first we had had for several weeks.

Below Calatascibetta we saw the stalks of a prodigious number of aloes* which had flowered in summer, and had at a distance almost the appearance of a plantation of young larch with the lower boughs lopped off. It is a common notion, but not a correct one, that they only flower once in a hundred years; it depends altogether on their growth, and that again on the heat; consequently, here, and in other hot countries, it occurs at the end of about five years. The stem grows with great rapidity to the height of near twenty feet, but this may be considered as the expiring effort of the plant, for it withers and dies soon after. A coarse thread called *zambarrone* is made from the fibres of the leaves, but it is not much used, except for halters, and purposes of that description. The aloe forms excellent fences, but not so impenetrable nor so high as those of the Indian fig, for it seldom attains a greater height than five feet.

* The *Agave Americana*.

CHAPTER VI.

CASTRO-GIOVANNI.—LAKE OF ENNA.—LEONTINE PLAIN.—CATANIA.

WE were now treading on classic ground,—

“Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathes around,”—

and soon began to wind up towards Castro-Giovanni. Until we had closely approached the base of the mountain we could not discover how we were to ascend, for the sides are so precipitous that, unless a road had been worked in the rock, a person would require to be drawn up by a rope, like the clergyman in his annual visit to the great Dimon, one of the Faroe Islands. The ascent was very tedious, and when we at last got to the platform on which the town stands, we could, from the opposite side, look down over a precipice rising in naked grandeur to the height of 2000 feet.

Our first object was to procure a lodging, but in this we experienced more difficulty than we had anticipated. In our distress we had recourse to the Syndic, who was so kind as to give us an order, which we, of course, thought would work marvels. With this in our hands, and under the guidance of a policeman, Don Filippo, we went to an old priest's house, but he said the Syndic always sent strangers to him,

and that, not long before, two Sicilian officers ate and drank all he had, and went away without repaying him, so he would have nothing to do with us. We then tried the monasteries, but the stables in which we had left our mules would have afforded more desirable quarters than those we entered. Our last attempt was upon some Baron, who occupied a very large house, but his objection to receiving us was conceived altogether in another strain from that of the priest:—to our solicitations he replied, “I have dined with the King, and what would His Majesty say if he knew that I let lodgings!” In this dilemma, for we had passed two hours in the streets, we decided on returning to our friend the Syndic, and trying if he could do any better for us. This proved the more prudent course, for, after a little discussion, he gave us the keys of the town-hall, and desired the policeman to procure beds for us, and to make himself useful in any way that we might require as long as we remained. There we found five large airy rooms, with no great abundance of furniture indeed, but they were clean, and we soon made ourselves perfectly at home.

In the evening D. Filippo (every one is called Don in this country) took us to some races, where we had an opportunity of seeing the greater portion of the population of the town. The ladies turned out in great force, if not beauty; their dress had nothing very remarkable about it; that of the men was singularly ugly. It consisted of a short jacket, breeches, and gaiters of coarse black frieze, a white waistcoat and cotton cap, which in England would be called a night-cap, and hide sandals with the hair on. These sandals are much worn in Sicily, and are the same as the *caliga*, or military shoe

of the ancients, as it is represented in Greek medals and bronzes. They are generally fastened on by a multitude of leather thongs, the due adjusting of which is a very tedious operation.

The races were not in themselves very attractive, at least to us, but the other spectators seemed to enter into the sport with infinite glee. The course lay up a very steep ascent, of not more than a quarter of a mile long, but quite enough for the miserable hacks that had to run. The winner was paraded in triumph over the ground, and then conducted into the town, like the victor of old at the Olympic games. We made acquaintance while there with an old Frenchman, who told us that he had served under Napoleon, but having lost his property, had retired to this place, married a Sicilian wife, and supported himself by teaching languages. What induced him to fix on such a locality he did not say, though he informed us, that "*un brave homme qui ne manque pas de talent, se trouve toujours bien.*" To judge, however, by his appearance, the project had not proved more successful than young Primrose's plan of teaching Greek at Louvain.

At what period Enna was founded, or by whom, is not known with certainty; but it is improbable, as some writers have conjectured, that it owed its origin to Syracuse. The Grecian mythology is so strange a mixture of truth and fiction, that it is difficult to decide what to credit, or what to reject; but, making every allowance for poetic embellishment, it would be going rather too far to suppose, that a story so widely circulated as that of the rape of Proserpine was altogether an imaginary event. That personage, we are always

told, was carried off from the neighbourhood of Enna, from which one would naturally infer that the town was already in existence, and if so, it must be older, by more than three centuries, than Syracuse, which was not founded till the year 719 before Christ. Sir Isaac Newton says, in his *Chronology*, that in the year 1030 before Christ, "Ceres, a woman of Sicily, in seeking her daughter who was stolen, came into Attica, and there taught the Greeks to sow corn, for which benefaction she was deified after death." This certainly is treating it as a matter of history; but when we know that Ceres and Proserpine were mutually confounded with each other, as well as with Juno, Diana, Venus, Minerva, Bellona, and a host of other divinities,* and that the former personage was often worshipped under the symbol of a horse's head, it is not easy to say who or what they were, or whether, after all, they were anything more than some first principle or quality to which those names were indiscriminately given. Of those who contend for a purely allegorical origin, the opinion is, that Ceres was the earth; Proserpine, the earth's produce; Pluto, her ravisher, the sun at the time of harvest, when that produce is collected and carried off; and the residence of Proserpine half the year in the infernal regions, and the other half

* APULIUS, *As. AUR.* lib. xi.—the Moon is represented speaking: "En adsum tuis Luci commota precibus! rerum natura parens, &c. &c. Cujus numen unicum, nomine multijugo, totus veneratur orbis. Me primigeni Phryges Pessinuntiam nominant, Deum Matrem. Hinc Autochthonos Attici, Cecropiam Minervam; illinc fluctuantes Cyprii, Paphiam Venerem; Cretes sagittiferi, Dictynnam Dianam; SICULI TRILINGUES, STYGIAM PROSERPINAM; Eleusini, vetustam Deam Cererem: Junonem alii: alii Bellonam, &c. &c."

with her mother, the different seasons when the earth is clothed with corn, or the contrary. The person, whoever he was, who wrote a book to prove that Rosamond Clifford never existed, would probably stop here; but as we never owned the feeling that prompted him to such a task, and considering also, that, in every case where it is possible to arrive at any certainty, the tales of Grecian mythology appear to have originated in some real incident, we shall persist in believing, and without, perhaps, being very far from the truth, that Ceres and her daughter were ladies not very unlike those of the present day, whom superstition and other causes concurred in loading with so many and such various attributes.

“ The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
 The fair humanities of old religion,
 The power, the beauty, and the majesty,
 That had her haunts in dale, or piny mountain,
 Or forest, by slow stream or pebbly spring,
 Or chasms and wat’ry depths ; all these have vanished,
 They live no longer in the faith of reason !
 But still the heart doth need a language, still
 Doth the old instinct bring back the old names.”

COLERIDGE—WALLENSTEIN.

Alas ! the temples and other ancient edifices of this sacred city have long since disappeared ; the groves and flowers that once clothed its fields, and perfumed the air, have been supplanted by briars and thistles :

“ Pro molli viola, pro purpureo narcisso,
 Carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis.”

Enna was subsequently celebrated as the stronghold of the revolted slaves under Eunus, in the first Servile War, who, from the almost impregnable nature of the place, were enabled for several years to set at defiance the whole power of Rome. They were eventually overcome by Perpenna, on which occasion 20,000 of them lost their lives in battle, and numbers were crucified by the side of the public roads.

The town did not escape the searching rapacity of Verres, but it would fill a volume to enumerate all that the unfortunate Sicilians suffered at his hands.

The modern town of Castro-Giovanni contains about 11,000 inhabitants, but no buildings of any importance; and the whole place bears the appearance of extreme wretchedness and poverty. The plain occupied by it is upwards of a mile long, and abundantly supplied with water. With the exception of Calatabellota, it is the highest inhabited spot in the island, being upwards of 3000 feet above the level of the sea; security from their enemies having been, as elsewhere, the motive of those who first established themselves on it. On the verge of the precipice before alluded to stood the far-famed temple of Ceres, not a stone of which is now visible. Its total destruction cannot be too much lamented, for in such a situation it must have been one of the most magnificent objects in the world. Such vast masses of the rock have fallen down, and now lie in heaps at the bottom, that it is not improbable that the precise spot once occupied by the temple is no longer in existence; and that, were it possible to remove the débris, the shattered remains of this splendid edifice might yet be discovered.

In the centre of the platform or table rock there is a large square stone, said, but without much apparent reason, to have formed part of the altar of the temple. Returning by a kind of isthmus, the only way by which that insulated part of the mountain can be reached, we passed the castle, erected by Frederick II., King of Sicily, and once a place of considerable strength. With the exception of one tower, used as a prison, it is now in ruins. As evening was approaching, we left the spot, and returned to our apartments in the Cancellaria.

September 14.—Our first visit was to the Syndic, to thank him for his kindness. He received us with great politeness, and entered with spirit into a dissertation on the antiquities and former splendour of this his native town. He spoke with as much warmth of the malpractices of Verres, and of the woes of the Servile War, as if he had himself been a sufferer, and told us how a consul was obliged to come from Rome to subdue Enna, and, in short, what a great place it once was. It was interesting, and yet half laughable to see, still in full vigour, passions and patriotism originating in events that took place nearly 2000 years ago; but a similar feeling may be remarked wherever people imagine that the sun of their country's glory has set. Is it not in fact only a more widely diffused pride of ancestry? But the spirit and energy often manifested by the Sicilians on such occasions, convince one there is yet that within them, which might, under more favourable circumstances, restore the fallen fortunes of their country, and revive the days of Gelon and Timoleon.

The castle was our next object, and from the walls we saw beneath us, at the distance of about five miles, the lake, and

“ That fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered.*

We afterwards, with a little difficulty, ascended by a broken staircase to the summit of the highest tower, the view from which is not a little striking. We were as nearly as possible in the centre of Sicily,† and the sea was distinctly visible on the three sides of the island. Monte Pellegrino and Mount Eryx, the latter at a distance of 110 miles, were high above the horizon; and Ætna, the “pillar of the heavens,” appeared still too near to allow us to embrace, at one view, the half of its gigantic base. The most striking circumstance in this panoramic survey is the extreme inequality of the ground in every direction. There are many countries where the mountains are much higher than those of Sicily, Ætna excepted; but there is not, perhaps, any part of the globe, of similar extent, so uniformly rugged. From this elevated spot nothing is to be seen but hills rising beyond hills, like the

* Paradise Lost, iv. 68.

† Δοκει (Εννα) δ'έν μεση κεισθαι τῆς ὅλης νησοῦ. διὸ καὶ Σικελίας ὀμφαλὸς ὑπο τινῶν ὀνομαζεται.—DIOD. SIC. v. 3.

Castro-Giovanni, or Castrojanni, as it is sometimes called, is evidently a corruption of *Castrum Ennæ*, and is not, like many other towns, indebted for its name to some saint. Altering the names of places or things into a more familiar form is common to all nations:—thus, the mountain Soracte is now Sant' Oreste, and the S. Pietro, or *gianitore*, a well-known fish, is by us called John Dory. A more whimsical illustration of this remark is afforded in the modern name of Selinus, before alluded to: there is reason to suppose that it was, at one time, called Terra di Polluce, but as the Sicilians did not know who Pollux was, they changed it into Terra de' Pulci—the *Land of Fleas*.

waves of the ocean in a storm, without the slightest apparent intervention of level ground.

The gaoler, who did the honours for us, took particular care to draw our attention more than once to the spot where the rape of Proserpine is *located*, as the Americans say; and before descending, a sketch of it was attempted, but the wind was so high that it was left unfinished as it now appears. Our cicerone, a true Sicilian, persisted in calling the ravisher *Pultoni*, a mode of transposition that occurs frequently in the language of this country.

The prisoners, who had been watching us from between the bars of their cage, with evident anxiety, and had occasionally called out to us, became more vociferous on our approaching their part of the building, imploring charity for the “*poveri carcerati*.” We entered into conversation with several of them, upon the principle that, under whatever circumstances, “the proper study of mankind is man,” and were somewhat amused and surprised at the frankness with which they communicated the various causes of their incarceration, —altogether a catalogue of atrocities in which perhaps assassination was the least revolting. And yet these men, though in fetters, loaded with crimes sufficient to sink a soul to the lowest depths of perdition, and even in the act of suffering some portion of the punishment due to those crimes, were laughing, singing, and, to all appearance, elated, rather than cast down at their fate.

The prison discipline in Sicily is of the very worst description: nothing like classification is attempted; all ages and the most dissimilar crimes are treated alike; murderers

and the pilferers of a loaf of bread being crowded together in one indiscriminate mass of riot and abomination. Amongst those whom we saw on the present occasion was an innocent looking boy, who could not have been more than fourteen years old, and who had been put in confinement for some paltry theft ; and in what company ! It was melancholy to think upon it. No employment whatever is provided for the prisoners, and such a thing as a gaol-delivery is but rarely attempted ; those alone are brought to justice who have been guilty of some very atrocious crime, or who are accused of sedition, in which latter case the government take care to pursue them with a degree of unrelenting malignity proportioned to their own feebleness and incompetency. As to the others, they wear on their existence till the happy day arrives, at the end perhaps of ten years, when the prison has become too full to receive any more inmates. To make room for fresh arrivals, they are then let loose on the country, often without having once heard the grounds of their detention ; the innocent never having had an opportunity of proving themselves such, and the guilty never having met the reward of their misdoings.

The effect of all this can easily be imagined ; instead of checking crime, it increases it, for they who are so unfortunate as to fall under the operation of such a system are returned upon the country, unfitted for any course of life but such as must again lead them within the walls of a prison : if it finds them originally innocent, it leaves them worthless ; and if guilty, it only hardens them by association with wretches more abandoned than themselves.

Leaving the prisoners to their fate, we returned into the

town, and visited the Madre Chiesa, dedicated to the Virgin. Mass was going on when we entered, but it was soon over, and gave us an opportunity of seeing the little that deserved attention. The building is heavy, and in a bad style, and some paintings that were shown to us in the sacristy are not worth looking at. Continuing our walk, we again left the town, and at a little distance came to an old octagonal tower called the Torre Eliana. The lower part consists of a vaulted chamber with pointed arches, and above it is another room, but the stairs are broken, and we did not try to ascend. It is said to have been built by the Saracens. Further on, in the same direction, is the convent of the Padri Riformati, standing in the midst of a garden that reaches to the edge of the precipice. On this spot, according to tradition, stood the temple of Proserpine, to which the statue of Ceres was transported every year, on a visit to her daughter. The custom may be said to be still kept up, for the image of the Madonna is annually removed from the cathedral to the church of the Riformati, and remains there a fortnight.

Whatever the religion of the Sicilians may now be called, it differs very little from that of their heathen ancestors. I should be sorry to say that it is not Christianity, but if it be so, the truth is enveloped in such a chaos of error and superstition, as to be hardly any longer distinguishable. A mere change of name would appear to be all that has as yet been effected, for even among the ancients, the existence of one Almighty Spirit, who alone could direct the destinies, or relieve the wants of men, was known to the philosophic few ;

and there is reason to suppose that, under the veil of the Eleusinian mysteries, that belief was impressed upon the initiated. Such a doctrine was, however, considered too sublime for the vulgar, and so it still seems to be in the opinion of the hierarchy of more than one nation professing the religion of Rome. As then, so now, the interposition of some inferior beings who had once shared our passions and infirmities, or of some visible objects of adoration, are deemed requisite to assist the grosser perceptions of the uneducated.

Though the mixture of religion with the common concerns of life is anything but an error, the excess of the practice has led, in this country at least, to an almost total alienation of people's minds from that Power, before which all others are as nothing. Oppressed with an overwhelming sense of the distance that separates them from the Sovereign of the universe, and not daring to address to Him those trifling, and in some instances improper petitions, which they do not hesitate to make to beings raised but one degree above themselves, they have in effect abandoned his worship for one which they can follow with less feeling of awe and restraint. The doctrine, that there is only "one Mediator between God and man," has been completely swallowed up in the adoration paid to the "Queen of Heaven;" and favours, in the power of the Deity alone to confer, are sought at the hands of a countless multitude of canonized mortals. If danger be apprehended at sea, the Madonna is invoked to calm the waves ; if a horse be sick, Sant' Antonio is besought to take

upon himself the office of farrier ; if a house be on fire, another Sant' Antonio is to extinguish the flames :* and if a young lady desire a lover, Sta. Brigida is requested to turn Cupid, and transfix some vacant heart.†

Those who defend the practice of the Greek and Roman churches, in using pictures to enlist the senses on the side of salvation, would fain persuade us, that the distinction between the sign and the thing signified is never lost sight of : this may be true as far as regards persons of education, but those who have witnessed the affectionate and impassioned devotion of the lower order of Italians and Sicilians, to the effigies of their saints, will be inclined to doubt the fact. Were it otherwise, so much importance would not be attached to the object itself ; vessels would venture to sea without having their image on board, and ballerine would not be afraid of spraining

* A curious circumstance, connected with the anti-conflagration Sant' Antonio, occurred at Naples in 1816:—on the festa of that saint, the impresario of S. Carlo, in compliment to the known prejudices of the lately restored royal family, caused the porch of the theatre to be fitted up as a chapel, and the orchestra being in attendance, the saint was honoured by various cavatine, overtures, and ariette, executed in the most brilliant style. The following week the theatre was totally destroyed by fire.

On the king's birth-day, January 12, a temporary altar is erected in the porch of all the principal churches in Naples, candles are placed around, and above is suspended a portrait of the King ! Let such a practice speak for itself: any commentary would be thrown away.

† This is literally a fact: the Neapolitan opera girls, and others of habits equally questionable, may frequently be seen in the church of Sta. Brigida, imploring her to exert her influence in putting them in the way of arranging an *amicizia* :

“Nequicquam Divûm numen, sortisque fatigant,”

one might say in very truth.

their ankles, if they danced without a paper Madonna hanging to their neck.

Many other traces of the "ancient faith" cannot fail to be remarked by any person whose attention is directed that way: the canonization of saints, for instance, is nothing but the apotheosis of heroes and demi-gods; the nuns are but a revival of the vestal virgins. The condition of the former is certainly more hopeless, for their vows are binding on them till death, whereas the vestals, if they could get any one to have them, were permitted to marry at the expiration of thirty years. A precedent for the tonsure of persons in holy orders may be found among the priests of Isis and Serapis,* and for their celibacy, in that of the Eumolpidæ, to whom marriage was prohibited after they had entered on the sacred office. What are the "anime in purgatorio," but the "inhumata turba," who have not yet passed the Styx, and are condemned to wander for years along its dreary banks; or patron saints, but the tutelar deities of earlier days? Syracuse was formerly under the especial protection of Minerva; now of Sta. Lucia; Trapani has exchanged Venus for the Virgin; and Catania, Ceres for Sant' Agata. Every person who has visited the southern parts of Italy, must have frequently observed the Calabrian *zampognari* playing on their two favourite instruments before the shrines of the Madonna: the custom did not originate with them:—

* 'Οι ιερείς θεῶν τῇ μὲν ἀλλῇ κομεύουσι ἐν Ἀιγυπτῷ δὲ, ξυρεύνται.—HEROD. EUTER. 36.

"It is clear that we ought not to be seen with our heads shaven like the priests and worshippers of Isis and Serapis."—ST. JEROME; BINGHAM, vi. 4.

"Ante deum Matrem* cornu tibicen adunco
Cum canit, exiguæ quis stipis æra neget?"

OVID. EPIST. EX. PONT. I. 39.

In nothing is the similarity between ancient and modern times more apparent, than in the consecration of every "high place" to some particular saint:—in days of yore the Alban Mount was supposed to be the favourite resort of Jupiter,† Lucretilis of Faunus, Lycæus or Rhodope of Pan, and Eryx of Venus; now each mountain has its S. Giuliano, S. Calogero, S. Bonifacio, or Sta. Rosalia. From passages in Horace, Ovid, &c., it appears that the ancients carried their *Dii tutelares* to sea with them:—

"Non tibi sunt integra lintea,
Non Di, quos iterum pressa voces malo."

HOR. OD. I. XIV. 9.

"Monte nec inferior proræ puppique recurvæ
Insilit, et pictos verberat unda Deos."

OVID. TRIST. I. IV. 7.

The modern Italians and Sicilians are at least as careful not to tempt the dangers of the deep without their Madonna or S. Giuseppe, on whose protection, in case of danger, they rely as much as on their own exertions. Instead of Castor and Pollux,‡ Chimæra,§ or Centaurus, their vessels are now

* It is singular that this expression should be precisely the title given to the Virgin Mary in the Roman ritual: she is there called the "Mother of God."

† A convent of Passionists stands on the spot once occupied by the temple of Jupiter Latialis.

‡ The ship in which St Paul sailed from Melita to Syracuse had that name.—ACTS, xxviii. 11.

§ Æneid. v. 118, 122.

called the S. Celso e S. Giuliano, Sta. Maria della Consolazione, la Madonna della Provvidenza, &c. The little figures of Janus, or of some other deity, that formerly guarded the gates of houses, have been driven from their niches by effigies of the Virgin and Child, and the *Dii Cubiculares* may still be seen at the head of every bed, under the borrowed names of the Madonna, S. Vincenzo, Sta. Petronilla, or of some other "virgin and martyr."

Among the more curious of these customs "copied from the antique" is that of reviling their saints, when mortified by disappointment.* If a storm lasts more than a reasonable time, it is no unusual thing for the unfortunate image to be thrown into the sea for its non-interference; and when S. Genaro's blood does not liquefy at the prayers of the populace, murmurs of disapprobation may first be heard, then more audible expostulations, coupled with prayers to God, that he will entreat the saint to perform the miracle, and at length their impatience breaks forth in the grossest abuse of the luckless gilt bust: "Che faccia brutta! O briccone! Che bestia gialla! O maledetto! Accidente!" and similar expressions, resound through the church.

A classical parallel for the lower orders being debarred from reading the Scriptures, it would not be so easy to find; but the source whence the interdict came seems to have been open to the Brahmins, amongst whom the penalty upon a

* Upon the death of Germanicus, the Roman populace vented their indignation upon the gods, by throwing stones at the temples, overturning the altars, and casting the Lares into the streets.

Soodra's hearing or reading the Shasters is, that boiling lead should be poured into his ears. The holy water and censer are taken, without alteration, from the lustral water and incense of the heathen temples; and the amulets tied by a string to the neck, the branches of coral worn by children* to avert the mal'occhio, the religious processions and sacred dramas, would scarcely be distinguished by a resuscitated Flamen from those of his own day.

Some of these may be, and no doubt are, harmless delusions, that perhaps render those who can harbour them more happy: but a religion that tends to substitute outward observance for the sincere devotion of the heart, and attaches merit to the action, disregarding the spirit in which it is done, must ever be deficient in moral influence. The very performance of their religious rites is often considered to give an indemnity for the commission of future irregularities, and frequently, while the letter of the divine commandment is adhered to, the spirit of it is violated without either shame or remorse. As long as the Sicilian mutters a few sentences at the sound of the Ave Maria bell, falls on his knees when the Host is passing, and listens, on Sundays and saints days, to some prayers of which he cannot understand a syllable, it matters little in his estimation how the remainder of his time is spent. Even the Italian banditti, the most ruthless of their race, are rigid

* Pliny, speaking of coral, says: "*Aruspices eorum vatesque inprimis religiosum id gestamen amoliendis periculis arbitrantur. Itaque et decore et religione gaudent Surculi infantis adalligati, tutelam habere creduntur.*"—*NAT. HIST.* xxxii. 11.

observers of the rites of their church, and while prowling along their mountain paths, the scene of many a murder, would as soon think of sparing their intended victim, as of passing a crucifix without crossing themselves.

They seem to have framed for themselves some kind of debtor and creditor system, by which, in proportion as their guilt increases, so must their diligence in repeating their Pater and Ave; and no matter how monstrous soever the former, provided the latter can keep pace with it, they think in the long run to strike a satisfactory balance.

I would not by any means be understood as wishing to assert that this extreme of moral degradation is owing to the religion that they profess:—much is no doubt to be attributed to the culpable indifference of the clergy, who seem to think that, mass once ended, they are free to dispose of their time as it pleases them. Even the benefit of their example is denied to the people, for whom, as well as for the clergy themselves, it would be well if indolence and neglect were the most objectionable part of their conduct. It is not to be expected that a body sunk, as they are, for the most part, in ignorance and sensuality, should have much influence on the minds of their flocks, or that anything but contempt should be the consequence of their demoralization. The power of the Jesuits over weak and vulgar minds resided at least as much in their sanctified exterior as in their deep and artful policy, but the great mass of the Sicilian priesthood have neither the art nor the intrinsic worth to rescue them from slight and degradation.

The effect of so many concurrent causes has been to sub-

stitute superstition for religion in the minds of the lower orders, and to drive the upper and more educated classes into nothing short of practical atheism. They have neither the energy, nor perhaps the wish, to explore this worse than Cretan labyrinth, for the truth that would infallibly break upon them at the end. The mere thirst for knowledge is not a sufficient inducement to exertion with the generality of mankind, and even were it otherwise, the indolence and levity of the Sicilians would render them an exception to the rule. As it is, when conversing on the subject, they say, that they follow the "religion of nature," but unfortunately the meaning of such abstract and indefinite expressions is too well known. The time, however, it is to be hoped, will yet come, when more favourable circumstances will raise them to that rank in the moral world, to which their talents as a nation, and their natural good dispositions, so well entitle them.

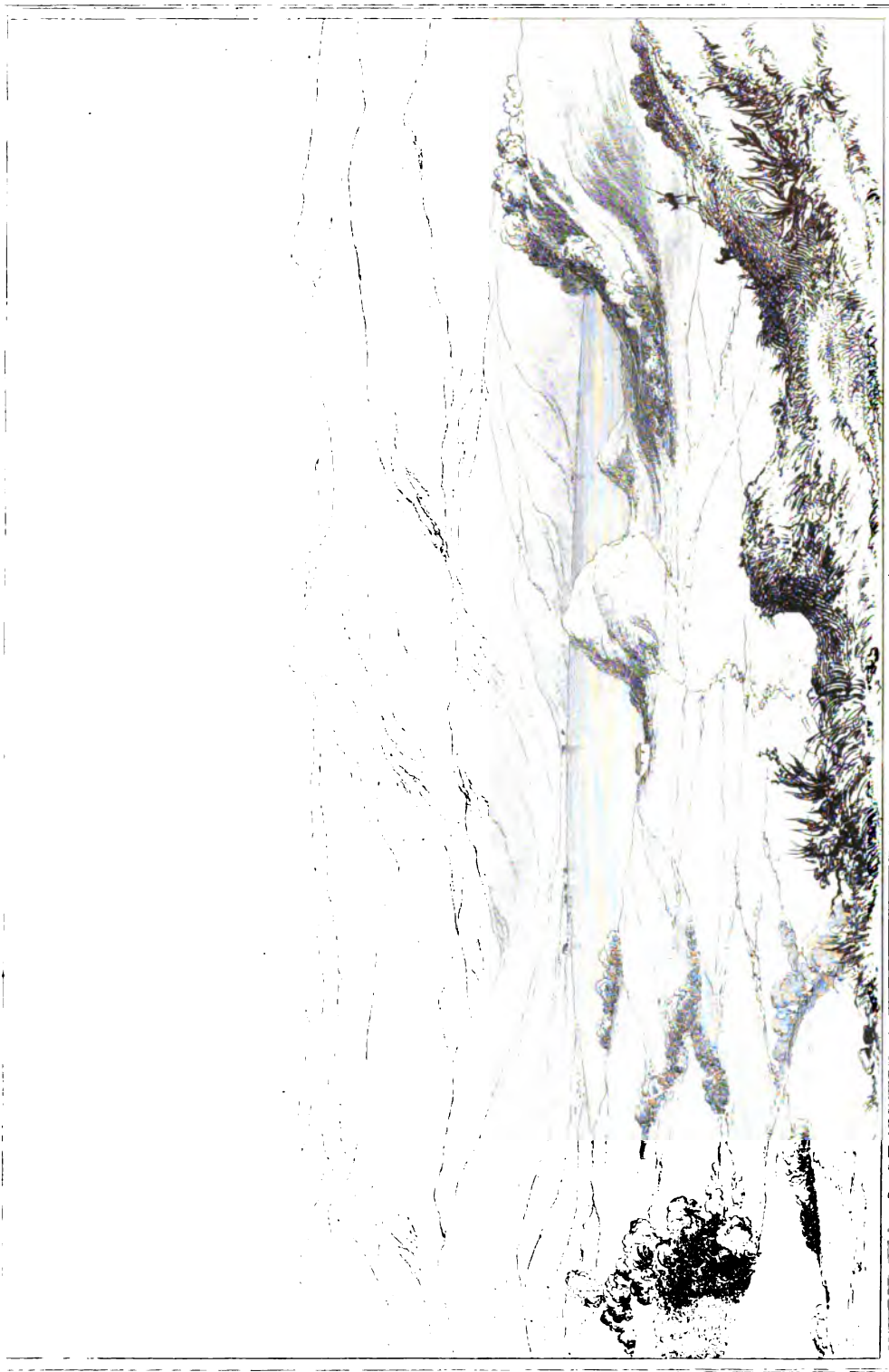
Before returning to our apartments in the town-hall, we went to the house of a person who was said to have a large collection of ancient coins, and so in truth he had, but they were principally the copper coinage of the later Roman emperors, which in this country, as well as in Apulia and other parts of the south of Italy, is so common, as to be valued only at its own weight in copper. As an innkeeper said of a handful of coins of Trajan and Antoninus Pius, "*O Signore, non vale niente questa roba.*" In some of the towns of Sicily, they are very expert in fabricating medals to impose upon unwary travellers, but a practised eye would seldom be deceived by them.

September 15.—Before sunrise we had left Castro-Gio-

vanni, and were descending the hill. A paved road reaches to the base of the mountain, but so broken up and uneven, as to oblige us to walk and lead our mules. In an hour and twenty minutes, by dint of goading our animals with some severity, we found ourselves on the margin of the lake, concerning which so much has been said and sung. And here again, whatever classical enthusiasm a traveller may bring with him is destined to meet with disappointment, for of all the former characteristics of the spot, it now retains but the simple one of being still a lake. With the exception of a few scattered trees at the western side, the low hills that surround it are bare and arid, the sweet-singing swans have been succeeded by myriads of frogs, and the water, so far from resembling Cayster's streams, was, in many parts, covered with green slime, and filled the air with its noxious exhalations. Of the flowers that once decked its banks, not a solitary lily or violet remained which we could carry off; and were a dog to lose his power of scenting game, it would be from a very different cause from that assigned by Diodorus Siculus.* The cave from whence Pluto issued, when about to carry off Proserpine,† is now choked up with fragments of rock; and as we had a long ride before us, we did not care to go into it. The lake is about four miles in circuit: we passed along the eastern bank, across a small plain overgrown with thistles. Beyond that, the ground again began to fall, and continued to do so for several miles: the country was wild and open, with only an occasional patch of cultivation. We passed some sulphur works, and,

* Diod. Sic. v. 3.

† Cic. in Verrem, iv. 48.

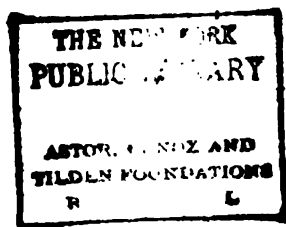


L. H. 1888-89.

THE MOUNTAIN SCENE - MOUNTAIN SCENE.

Published by H. L. & Co., Ltd., London, 1949.

From the collection of the British Museum.



after a tedious ride of eighteen miles along a rugged stony track, turned round the foot of a hill, and came in sight of Piazza, or, as the natives call it, Chiazz'. It is surrounded with trees, and pleasantly situated in a little valley, and, contrasted with the dreary and desolate region we had passed through, looked like an oasis in the desert. Of the interior of the town we saw but little, and that little did not make us wish to see more. It had not the poverty-stricken appearance of Castro-Giovanni, but certainly rivalled it in filthiness.

The inn to which we went was wretched in the extreme; it was only one story high, and the furniture of the best room consisted of one chair, a broken bedstead, and an equally crazy table. The landlady, an epitome of her house, as far as rags and misery went, was particularly anxious that we should remain there for the night, but had we intended going no further, we should have preferred our airy canvass walls to such a lodging. While dinner was in preparation, we employed ourselves repairing the damage the tent-pegs had sustained in the farm-yard; near the Giarretta, and towards evening resumed our journey.

Six miles from Piazza we passed through Aidone, a poor town of no importance, covering the summit of a lofty eminence, where we again came in sight of the plain of Catania. The descent from thence was steep and rugged, but the badness of the way was in some measure atoned for by the prodigious quantity of very fine Indian figs that were growing within reach on either side. These figs, or prickly pears as they are also called, the fruit of the *cactus opuntia*, are a principal article of food to the lower classes; in fact, during

the season that they continue fresh, from August to December, the peasants live almost entirely on them. It requires some skill and practice, when cutting off the thick rind, to prevent the innumerable little prickles that cover the outside from coming in contact with the pulp: not having served an apprenticeship, our tongues and lips were continually suffering the penalty of our inexperience. The plant itself is too well known to need description, though the specimens that are seen in English hot-houses give but a very faint idea of the size to which it attains: here it may often be seen growing to the height of fourteen or fifteen feet. It is very hardy, and is propagated by merely sticking a leaf into the ground, and as a fence it soon becomes perfectly impenetrable. There are three varieties of the plant: the first has very large spines on the leaves; the second has them smaller and fewer in number; while the leaves of the third are almost smooth. This latter kind is the favourite with the pigs, whose snouts are not proof against the sharp prickles of the others.

A short distance from Aidone we lost all traces of inhabitants, and entered upon an unenclosed tract of country like the Downs in Wiltshire. The sun had set, and by the little light that remained we pitched our camp near a small stream, having come exactly thirty miles from Castro-Giovanni. The wind was high, but the ground firm, and our house stood well. We lighted a fire and prepared our tea, while the muleteers set off in search of provender for their animals. Having concluded our meal, we shook out our beds and were soon asleep.

September 16.—As we had a long ride before us, we were in motion before 3 A. M.; but two hours were spent in packing

up. We were anxious to get to Catania, and pressed the mules to a pace very little in accordance with their usual habits. We soon left the hills, and just as the sun rose entered the great plain of Catania. With the exception of the Geloan fields near Terranova, this is the only perfectly level ground of any extent in Sicily: it is about twenty miles long, and twelve broad, and resembles more the plain of Marengo than those of Salisbury or Cannæ, where the surface is by no means an uninterrupted flat. It was formerly celebrated for its fertility.* Diodorus Siculus mentions it as one of the spots where wild wheat grew;† it was then called the Leontine plain, but had previously borne the name of the Læstrygonæ.‡ When Hercules was making the tour of Sicily,§ it must have presented an appearance very different from that it now bears, for it would be difficult to find a more cheerless, desolate, or neglected region. The soil is a rich loam mingled with volcanic ashes, but it had been so cracked and burned up by the sun, that the cattle which were wandering about appeared to be starving, rather than grazing, upon it.

We crossed the Fiume di S. Paolo, once the Eryces, and soon after halted at a mule station, called la Gabella, consisting of two or three houses. Here we were shown into an apartment about six feet square, separated from the stable by wicker hurdles; and our ride of fourteen miles having made us rather anxious to discover what addition could be made to a small loaf of hard bread we had brought from Castro-Giovanni, we inquired what they could give us to eat;—

* Polyb. vii. 6.

† Diod. Sic. v. 2.

‡ Sil. Ital. xiv. 125.

§ Diod. Sic. iv. 24.

"*niente*," was the short and conclusive answer. "Have you not even any bread?" we asked; "no," they replied: "nor macaroni?" "no:" "nor milk?" "*Latte!*" they exclaimed, repeating the word, and lifting up their hands and eyes as if we had made the most preposterous demand. We then asked, since they had none of those things, what they lived on themselves; upon which they produced half of a rancid white cheese, and told us, that throughout the year they never ate anything else, and considered themselves fortunate when they could get enough even of that. This was not very satisfactory intelligence to hungry travellers, but as there was no remedy, we lighted our pipes, and seating ourselves on some stones in the stable, entered into conversation with eight or ten ragged people, who had assembled to look at us. Amongst them was their priest, who appeared a degree more civilized than his flock, but was so absorbed in admiration of our shoes, that he could talk on no other subject. At length the bell tolled for mass; he led the way to a small chapel adjoining, and, the mules being ready, we continued our journey.

A few miles further on we forded the Giarretta, which here flows in a very broad and deep channel gradually worn by the stream: the ground on either side is so level, that until we had approached very near, we did not perceive that there was any break in the plain. Great numbers of oleanders and rhododendra were growing on the edge, close to the water, but no longer in flower. The beautiful specimens of red, black, yellow, and green amber, that are offered for sale at Catania, are found near the mouth of the river, but whence they come remains to be decided.

About fourteen miles from La Gabella we left the plain, but soon found that we were to suffer by the change. The road consisted of loose sand mixed with shingle and pieces of lava, and was confined between high hedges of Indian figs, palm trees, and olive plantations, which prevented any circulation of air: the heat was excessive, it being then one o'clock and the clouds of dust raised by so many mules trotting along were blinding. We were, therefore, well pleased when, after a ride of thirty-eight miles, we entered the gate of Catania at 4 P. M. Our unfortunate mules were completely knocked up by the rapidity of this forced march, but as they were likely to have some days' rest, we did not feel so much compassion for them as we should have done otherwise. We proceeded to the Albergo della Corona, the praises of which, or rather of its talkative and amusing landlord, Giuseppe Abate, and his incomparable pan-cakes, have been celebrated by a host of travellers.

CHAPTER VII

CATANIA.—ITS GENERAL APPEARANCE, HARBOUR, AND COMMERCE.—SANT' AGATA.—S. NICOLO.—FINE ORGAN.—MUSEO BISCARI.—ANCIENT THEATRE.—ODEUM.

CATANIA is one of the few towns in Sicily which in any degree answers, on a close inspection, the expectations formed from a distant view. If not the largest, it is certainly the handsomest town in the island, with a population of 40,000 inhabitants. Though the harbour is bad, a considerable export trade is carried on. The Catanese say, "Se Catania avesse porto, Palermo saria morto," and its position is such as fully to warrant the implication of the proverb. The streets are unusually wide, of great length, and intersect each other at right angles; and though the prevailing style of architecture exhibits too much of the confused ornaments, broken lines, and vitiated taste of the last and preceding century, the general effect is far from unpleasing. The town was so nearly annihilated by the tremendous eruption of *Ætna* in 1669, and by the subsequent earthquake of 1693, that the Duke of Camastro caused the little which remained to be pulled down, so that there might be no obstruction to rebuilding it on a more improved plan. He undoubtedly succeeded, if his design were merely to give an air of grandeur and magnificence to the

place; but the very circumstances that produce such an appearance, render it, in summer, one of the most intolerable residences in the island. The principal streets lying parallel to the cardinal points of the compass, would necessarily expose them to the rays of the sun during some hours in the day; but their breadth, the comparative lowness of the houses, and the magnesian limestone with which they are faced, conspire to render the heat and reflected glare of light equally painful to the eyes, and fatal to personal comfort. Narrow streets and lofty houses have no great charms in a climate where, for nine months in the year, the sun is obscured by a dense canopy of clouds and yellow fog; but if London and Catania were to exchange situations, we question whether Lombard-street would not be preferable as a residence to Portland-place. Those who have never gasped for breath under an almost vertical sun can scarcely appreciate the delight with which one dives into the murky labyrinths of some shady lane, where the sky only appears like a narrow strip of blue ribbon overhead.

The Piazza del Duomo, or del Elefanta, is nearly in the centre of the city, and commands a view of the gate leading towards Syracuse, of that which opens on the harbour, of the Strada Stesicorea, with *Ætna* appearing beyond its extremity, and of the street terminated by the statue of Sant' Agata, the guardian genius of Catania. The cathedral, a handsome and spacious structure, is dedicated to her, and occupies one side of this square. The columns of granite which ornament its porch were taken from the theatre of the ancient city.

Having been erected at a period when the rage for embellishing churches had in some measure subsided, and when those who had the means no longer felt the disposition to adorn their altars with costly offerings, it is tolerably free from those heavy ornaments and dingy frescoes which add to the gloom without increasing the solemnity. It was first endowed by Count Roger, the Charlemagne of Sicily; but of the original building little or nothing remains. By far the greater number of the religious foundations in this country date from that time, the subjects seeming to vie with their sovereign in acts of pious munificence. In the preamble to many of the title-deeds of such grants it is stated, that "*appropinquante magno judicii die, &c.*" the donor is induced to make over to the monastery or church in question the property, the possession of which would so soon become useless to his descendants. The monks were probably not over-anxious to discourage a delusion so profitable to themselves; but as the millenarians of the eleventh century have their representatives in the nineteenth, with expectations of course equally well founded, I will not provoke their ire by any inconsiderate remarks, but shall content myself with congratulating them on not having had ancestors who held similar opinions.

The absence of pews in Roman Catholic churches gives them, not only in appearance, but in other respects, a decided advantage over the religious edifices of Great Britain: the area is free and unincumbered, that distinction of ranks, which ought never to exist under such circumstances, is here lost

sight of, and the poor are not driven into some distant corner, as if their presence were offensive to their richer fellow-Christians.

It would almost appear, that the restriction which prohibited any but the fair sex from entering the temple of the Catanian Ceres had been enforced by her successor ; or if not, we must either suppose that the mass of the men are, in proportion to the females, unaccountably negligent of the rites of their Church, or that the religion is only suited to softer and more impressible minds. Be that as it may, the great majority of the congregations consists invariably of the "devout sex," as St. Augustine politely terms the ladies, and of a trifling admixture of old men on the brink of the grave, with here and there some youthful sinner, whom illness or the loss of friends has, for the moment, terrified into the opinion, that death is not an "eternal sleep."

A "*festa*" of Sant' Agata takes place twice in the year, in February and August, when a silver chest containing her hallowed remains* is exhibited to the impassioned gaze of the multitude ; but I do not trouble my readers with a detail of matters which I did not witness. Notwithstanding the signal and repeated disasters that have befallen Catania, her veil is

* They were brought back from Constantinople in 1126, a "*magnanima impressa*," which is recorded with the most ludicrous solemnity in the history of Catania, by the Professor Francesco Ferrara. Sant' Agata suffered martyrdom in the reign of Decius ; a representation of which event is preserved in the church *delle Sante Carceri*. The painting is not entirely destitute of merit, and is interesting both on account of its age, and as affording in the back-ground a view of the amphitheatre since overwhelmed by lava. It bears this date and inscription : "Bernardinus Niger Grecus faciebat, 1388."

still regarded as a never-failing palladium in every fresh convulsion of the mountain, for when once people are bent on believing what they wish to be true, experience will seldom shake their conviction. The town has been frequently destroyed without impairing its credit; every house, and even her own church, has been levelled to the ground, and in the reign of William the Good, 20,000 of the inhabitants, with the bishop at their head, lost their lives before the veil could be properly adjusted to check the burning flood.

In the centre of the square, and nearly opposite to the gate of the cathedral, there is a remarkable fountain, surmounted by an elephant sculptured in lava, and supporting on its back an obelisk of granite. The latter is ancient, but far inferior both in size and execution to those at Rome: the elephant is not older than the fifteenth century.

The commerce of Catania, although considerable, is by no means so extensive as that of Palermo or Messina. The principal export is snow, in which a very lucrative trade is carried on with Malta and some parts of the south of Italy. It is collected during the winter in pits and hollows on the mountain, and covered with the scorix and ashes to prevent its thawing. It is brought down on mules to the coast at night, in panniers covered with leaves. The revenue derived from this source is immense, and renders the Prince of Paternò one of the richest men in Sicily. Snow is the universal luxury, from the highest to the lowest ranks; it is sold at about the rate of twopence a rotolo, or thirty ounces, and the poorest cobbler would sooner deprive himself of his dinner than of his glass of "acqua gelata." It is also extensively used in the hospitals,

and a scarcity of it would be considered as great a misfortune as a famine, or any other national visitation, and would more infallibly occasion popular tumults. To guard against any such accidents, the government at Naples have made the providing it a monopoly, the contractor being required to give security to the amount of 60,000 ducats, which sum is forfeited if it can be proved that, for one hour, the supply was not equal to the demand. It is of much more ready application than ice, for water can be cooled in an instant by pouring it through a cloth spread with snow, as can wine by putting a small lump of it into the glass. The custom of using it thus,* as well as the manner of preserving it,† alluded to above, are extremely ancient.

The principal and indeed only manufacture of any importance is silk, which gives employment to a great number of poor females. It has been established here for many ages, the worms having been introduced from Greece, by Count Roger, to whom the Sicilians may justly consider themselves indebted for the greater part of the few benefits that have been conferred upon their country. But from want of that encouragement without which no branch of trade can

* *Ὅϊνον γὰρ πίνειν οὐκ ἂν εἰς
Δεξαίτο θέρμον, ἀλλὰ πολὺ τουνάντιον,
Ψυχόμενον ἐν τῷ φρέατι, χιόνι μεμύγμενον.*

STRATIS.

Alexis also, an ancient poet, says:

Καὶ χιόνα μὲν πίνειν παρασκευάζομεν.

† Chares, quoted by Athenæus, mentions that Alexander the Great, when in India, caused trenches to be dug, and, having filled them with snow, covered them with the branches of trees.

prosper, they have been left far behind by the English and French manufacturers, the silk now produced by the Catanian looms being, comparatively, of a flimsy and very inferior texture.

Though this town abounds with richly endowed charitable institutions, the poor are left in a great measure destitute, the funds which were originally destined for their support having been, if not swallowed up, at least very materially diminished, by the speculation and rapacity of the administrators, owing chiefly to the culpable neglect of those whose duty it was to inquire into and prevent such abuses.

The University was founded in 1445, by Alphonso of Aragon, and contains an excellent library, which is open to the public, and some handsome halls, but otherwise there is nothing very remarkable in its buildings: it is, however, of some notoriety, as being the only one in Sicily which confers degrees in law and medicine. The former faculty seems to thrive in a peculiar degree, if one may judge from the numbers and sleek appearance of its professors. At this season of the year they are almost the only society to be met with, every one else having retired for the *villeggiatura* to their country places in the vicinity. Even the theatre is closed.

September 18.—We started, escorted by a little old man named Don Mario, to visit the Benedictine convent of S. Nicolò, according to Captain Smyth the largest monastic institution in Europe, with the exception of the celebrated convent of Mafra in Portugal. Its great extent of front gives it an imposing appearance; but on a closer inspection it is evident, even to a person but superficially acquainted with such

matters, that a very indifferent taste is displayed in the various ornaments and details of the architecture. The decorations of the windows are especially ugly, and produce a very heavy and disagreeable effect. The church, measuring 550 feet in length, by 250 in breadth, exceeds in dimensions every other building of the kind in Sicily. Whatever faults there may be in the design, the stalls of the choir, most exquisitely carved in wood, deserve attention, even were there no organ to attract visitors. Notwithstanding the vast accommodation which the convent affords, the number of professed monks is not very large; that of the novices is considerably greater, though none but persons of noble family are admitted. We ascended by a handsome marble staircase to the galleries, off which are the cells of the monks; we entered several of them; they were neatly but plainly furnished, and in one or two stood a piano-forte. The Prior's apartments, although more spacious, had nothing characteristic about them; they neither looked like the abode of a devotee nor of a man of letters, and the furniture, at once gaudy and shabby, the vases of flowers, and mirrors with tarnished frames, gave them the comfortless air of a ball-room seen by daylight. The inner courts of the building are neglected, and overgrown with tall weeds, and contrasted most unfavourably with recollections of the neatly trimmed grass-plats and well-rolled gravel walks in the quadrangles of the Colleges at Oxford. But the genius of order and activity presides over one spot, while the nightmare of sloth and stagnation broods over the other.

Some of the corridors which surround these courts are nearly 200 feet in length: while strolling along them we were

much amused, though somewhat alarmed and scandalized, at the freedom of Don Mario's strictures on the monks, some of whom might possibly have heard every word that was spoken. Their existence, according to his account, is not of a very intellectual description, for, after telling us what they did not do, he said, "*in somma, mangiare, poi dormire—quest'è la vita de' frati.*" He also observed that the younger members of the society were not remarkable for their over-scrupulous adherence to certain inconvenient vows, and are in the habit of varying the monotony of their religious exercises, by devoting the evening to some amiable signorina.

As the hour for mass was approaching, we descended to the refectory, where we made acquaintance with the monk who was to preside at the organ, and who politely offered, in addition to the regular service, to perform some piece which would enable us to judge of the power and compass of the instrument. We were accordingly ushered into the church, and accommodated with chairs in front of the railing of the altar, while the service proceeded. At length, when it concluded, and the monks had retired, there was a moment's pause, and the organ commenced. The sound, at first, came stealing along softly and sweetly; it swelled gradually, and became louder; the whole church was filled with a flood of harmony, and it pealed at length along the vaulted roof, deep, clear, and solemn as the loudest thunder. It then as gradually subsided, till it sounded like the half-expiring notes of the softest flute, and, after a variety of alternately brilliant and slow movements, in which we hardly knew whether to admire most the astonishing compass and perfection of the instrument, or the

finished execution of the organist, the performance concluded with a military march, accompanied by the sound of harps, bugles, drums, and triangles.

This organ is justly esteemed one of the finest in Europe. It was built by a Calabrian monk, whose earthly remains repose under the instrument which ought to immortalize his name.

The museum attached to this monastery contains some very interesting antiquities, but the splendid collection of coins and medals which it formerly boasted was unfortunately stolen eight or nine years since. Amongst other relics, valuable from their rarity, there is a Roman legionary eagle, perfect with the exception of a trifling injury to the under mandible. It is precisely similar to those in the museum at Avignon, one of which is in a state of remarkable preservation.

Having seen all that deserved attention in the interior of the convent, we were taken to the garden, considered by the monks a terrestrial paradise, and which, as a monument of persevering labour, is certainly curious. It was formed on the surface of the lava of 1669, with earth brought from a distance, and is laid out like a Dutch garden, in long straight walks of glazed tiles, arranged in various patterns and devices. The opportunity of expatiating on the miracle by which the convent was preserved from the lava, was not lost by our conductors. It had flowed in a direct line towards the building, but, when within a few feet of it, turned off at a right angle, leaving a space much like the areas in front of the houses in London. Whether this occurred by mere accident,

or whether, as some have imagined, it was occasioned by the air compressed between the building and the lava, does not much signify: a similar instance may be observed at Torre del Greco, near Naples, where the stream divided itself into two branches, left a church untouched in the middle, and reunited below it.

Our next object was the museum formed by the late Prince Biscari, to which, after several disappointments, we obtained admission. It is extremely rich in antique statues, vases, cinerary urns, lachrymatories, lares in bronze and terracotta, lamps, stamps with names on them, sepulchral stones, and sarcophagi. One of the lamps represents a camel with an amphora on each side for carrying water, fixed in a kind of pannier. The gem of the collection is a torso of colossal size, supposed to be of Hercules, and deserving to rank with the finest specimens of ancient sculpture. Domenico Sestini, the celebrated numismatist, was formerly librarian to the Prince, and keeper of his cabinet.

It is impossible, when looking at the stamps with long inscriptions in relieved letters, not to feel some surprise that the ancients, who had, one might almost say, actually arrived at stereotype printing, should never have thought of making moveable types. It is perhaps fortunate for the learned that they did not; but, from some cause which it would be difficult to explain, their ingenuity seems rarely to have been directed towards the merely useful of the mechanical arts. While the remains of their architecture, their sculpture, pottery, and exquisite medals and intaglios, have set at defiance the imitation of all succeeding ages, as would their pictures, had any but

the daubs of house-painters come down to us ; their keys, bells, pins and needles, knives (forks they had none, except pitch-forks), spoons, mortars for bruising corn, their ploughs and other agricultural implements, in short, all but their surgical instruments, betray the rudeness and clumsiness of design of a semi-barbarous people.

Towards evening we strolled down the Corso till we came to an open space, with stone benches round it, close to the sea, and seating ourselves at the base of the granite column, surmounted by the statue of Sant' Agata, enjoyed the cool breeze, and the fumes of a real Havannah. The prospect from thence, though not extensive, is singular ; immediately before us was the *sciarra*,* still hard and fresh in appearance, that flowed from the mountain upwards of a century and a half ago, and beyond it the coast winding along to the black promontory of Trizza ; to the left, the dingy hue of more distant streams was curiously contrasted with the vineyards, orange groves, and trim villas scattered between them ; while on the other side lay the sea, with the fantastic forms of the Scogli de' Ciclopi reflected upon its smooth surface.

The population of this town has been variously estimated : Captain Smyth rates it as high as 74,000 ; Mr. Swinburne, who was here in 1778, gives only 30,000 as the number ; but in a topographical work published at Palermo in 1827, it is stated at 45,081, which is probably not far from the truth.

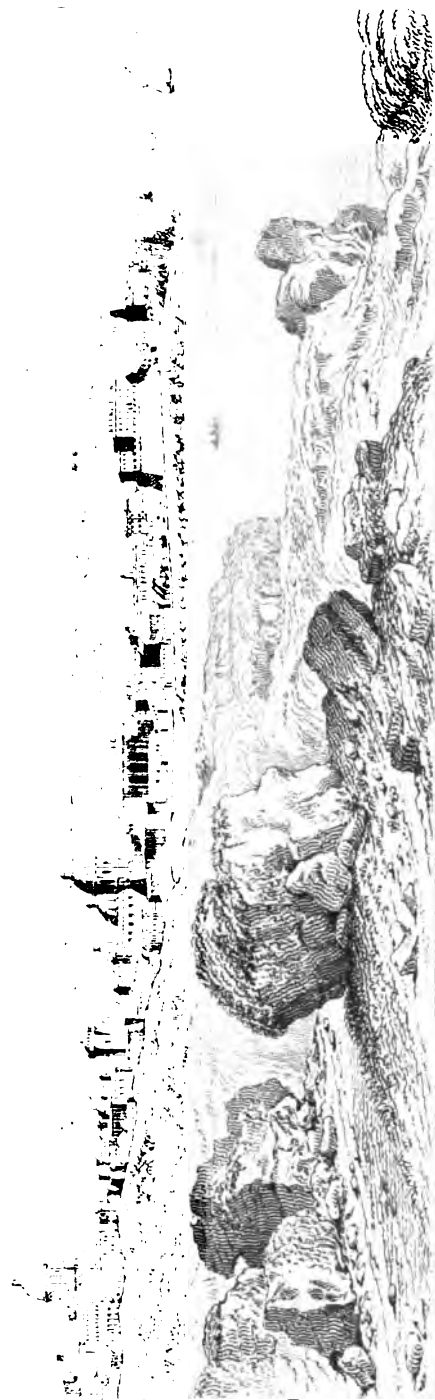
* *Sciarra* is the Sicilian term for a stream of lava ; the latter word is not used.

Why the inhabitants should have considered the term "illustrious"* as applicable to their city, I am not aware; for it has been well observed, that, "were it not for Sant' Agata and Ætna, the annals of Catania would be barren and uninteresting." It never, at any period of its history, played a prominent part in the affairs of Sicily, and seems to have been satisfied with the disasters inseparable from its situation at the base of a volcano,† without tempting those contingent upon a participation in the quarrels of its rival neighbours. It was founded by a colony of Chalcidians from Naxos, led by Evarchus, about the year 713 before Christ, though the natives choose to refer their origin to Deucalion, the Noah of Grecian mythology. It suffered considerably from the cruelty of the first Hiero, who changed the name of the city, and expelled the inhabitants, but at his death they returned, and the original name of Catane was resumed. It was amongst the earliest of the Roman conquests in Sicily, and became the residence of a prætor, during which period the amphitheatre and other magnificent edifices were erected. It was greatly injured by Sextus Pompey, but was soon after restored by Augustus to more than its former splendour.

* Each of the principal towns in Sicily rejoices in some laudatory agnomen, supposed to be descriptive of whatever is peculiar in its fortunes or appearance: thus, Palermo is *La Felice*; Messina, *La Nobile*; Syracuse, *La Fedele*; Girgenti, *La Magnifica*; Termini, *La Splendida*; Castro-Giovanni, *L'Insuperabile*, &c. These epithets are only applied to any particular city by its own inhabitants, for the Sicilians are as jealous of each other, as if their country were still divided into a number of petty republics.

† Catane, *nimum ardenti vicine Typhæo*.

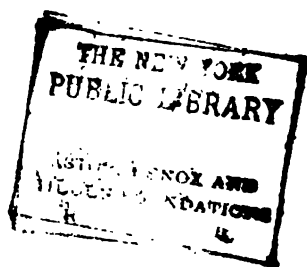
SIL. ITAL. XIV. 196.



From a li. 4. fol.

Engraved by H. Dodge & Smith. Dred. in. 3. 249

W. J. 1. 1. 1.



The antiquities of Catania are few in number, and much dilapidated, for, though covered with lava for some ages, they had previously remained exposed sufficiently long to undergo all the usual ravages of time and barbarism. Such as have as yet been discovered were excavated by Prince Biscari, who for many years employed a vast number of persons in this work. The principal is the amphitheatre, which must have been of great size, though in its present state it is difficult to form any just conception either of its dimensions or appearance. It was built of lava encrusted with marble, shattered fragments of which still remain. Part of its materials were made use of by Theodoric in repairing the walls of the town, who, notwithstanding this, was not such a *Goth* as he is generally supposed to have been. It was three stories high, but the corridors have been but very partially cleared, and can only be visited by torch-light.

The theatre is similarly circumstanced, and so encumbered with modern buildings, that little can be traced beyond a part of the seats, and of three semicircular corridors rising above each other. The granite columns by which it was once adorned may now be seen in the cathedral, whither they were removed by Count Roger. It is uncertain whether this was the theatre in which Alcibiades kept the Catanians engaged in useless debate, while his soldiers were making themselves masters of the city, but it appears more probable that it was of a later date.

Adjoining these ruins is the Odeum, or small theatre, a considerable portion of which, and of the seats for the audience, is visible above ground. This appendage to a larger

theatre was for some time supposed to be the only structure of the kind in existence, but a similar one has since been discovered in the grounds attached to the villa once occupied by Lucien Bonaparte at Frascati.

The warm and cold baths, but particularly the former, are interesting, as the furnaces for heating water, and the rooms for the use of bathers, have been excavated, and may still be traced. Near the fire-place there is a niche, the precise object of which antiquaries were long perplexed in determining, until some one decided that it was a vapour bath, where those afflicted with lumbago and sciatica were accustomed to receive the fumes in the most convenient posture.

Various other remains, such as tombs, tessellated pavements, and the ruins of a temple, said to be of Ceres, are pointed out by the ciceroni, but in so mutilated a condition as scarcely to deserve the attention of a traveller when on the spot, much less to justify the inflicting on my readers a description of them here.

CHAPTER VIII.

**ÆTNA.—ITS GENERAL FEATURES.—ANCIENT MENTION OF IT.—DIFFERENT
ERUPTIONS.—NICOLOSI.—SIGNOR GEMMELLARO.—CONE—SUNSET.—
CASA INGLESA.—SUNRISE.—CRATER.—MONTE ROSSO.—FOSSA DELLA
PALOMBA.—RETURN HOME.**

SEPTEMBER 19.—Ætna is, at Catania, the great and absorbing object of curiosity.

The name by which this celebrated volcano is known in Sicily is Monte Gibello, a word of Saracenic origin, *gibel* signifying in that language a mountain, as Gibel-Tarif, or, as it is now called, Gibraltar, means the mountain of Tarif. Considerable discussion has prevailed as to the derivation of its classical and more general appellation, some deducing it from the Hebrew *אֶתֶן נֹר*, a furnace, and others from the Greek *Αἰθίμη*, because it burns; but the question after all is of little importance. The circumference of the mountain at its base has given rise to a still greater diversity of opinion, Brydone and Recupero having calculated it at 183 miles, while Houel makes it only forty. By tracing it, however, along its natural boundaries, the sea, the Giarretta, and the Alcantara, it is very evident that it cannot be much more or less than ninety miles in circuit.

The three regions or zones into which it is divided by nature, have been justly remarked as affording an epitome of

every climate in the world. The lower or cultivated region extends up the mountain to a distance varying from six to eleven miles, excepting at the north-west side, where it is scarcely two in breadth. The fertility and romantic beauty of this district could scarcely be surpassed: vines, oranges, sugar-canes, pomegranates,—every fruit or flower, in short, that can delight the eye, or gratify the taste, are here produced in the richest profusion, while around are seen convents, villages, and churches, embosomed in groves of lemon and palm trees. Even the dark iron-grey streams of lava, rising above the surrounding country, seem by contrast to impart an additional charm to the verdure and luxuriance of the remainder. No other part of the island is so thickly inhabited, nor are the people elsewhere so uniformly well housed, clothed, or fed, for, dingy as their dwellings may appear, it should be borne in mind, that lava is the only building material. The danger of losing everything by an eruption is supposed by strangers to counterbalance any advantages, however great, and that, with Eden around them, the inhabitants can never forget their proximity to an abyss of unquenchable fire: but it will be found, that they are tormented by no such morbid anxiety. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof:” what others preach they practice. Like true philosophers, they neither fear the future nor lament the past, but are content to live on, with Sant’ Agata’s veil for their palladium, until convinced that even their goddess can no longer protect them, when they carry off their moveables, and migrate to some other part of this “casa del diavolo.” Comparatively few of the eruptions have, however, extended their ravages to the cultivated region; certainly not more, on an average, than two in a century.

To the cultivated succeeds the woody region,—a belt of forest extending upwards from two to eight miles, and consisting principally of oak, pine, and chesnut, interspersed with poplar, cork, ilex, beech, and a variety of other trees. It would be difficult to give any adequate notion of the appearance of this tract; some parts of it resemble the Black Forest in Germany, or the finest park scenery of England, diversified by a multitude of cones wooded to the summit, and re-echoing to the bells of cattle browsing among their shady solitudes; others again exhibit nothing but a gloomy waste of lava, as bare and arid as when first it issued from the crater.

Amongst the various articles exported from this district are cantharides, but whether they are bred in Sicily, or migrate from some other country, is uncertain. They are taken in great numbers in May and June, by spreading cloths under the olive trees at daybreak, and shaking the boughs, when the insects, weakened by the cold of the night, drop off, are tied up in the cloths, and afterwards dried in the sun.

Above the forest is the third or desert region, the lower part of which produces a few lichens, stunted shrubs, and a species of camomile; but all traces of vegetation soon disappear, and are succeeded by an unbroken expanse of ashes and scoræ, from the midst of which, in mournful grandeur, rises the great crater. So few travellers visit Sicily during summer, that the summit of the Mountain is very generally believed to be covered with “eternal snow;”^{*} such, however, is by no means

^{*} This mistake has been common to poets, geographers, and tourists of all ages: Pindar. Pyth. i. 38.—Sil. Ital. xiv. 67.—Claudian. De. Rap. Proserp. i.

the case ; from the middle of June to the latter end of October, it is black and bare as we have described it.*

Pindar is the earliest writer who speaks of Ætna as a volcano, the author of the *Odyssey* mentioning only that the Cyclopes, the ancient inhabitants of the mountain and its vicinity, dwelt in caves ; unless, indeed, the story of Polyphemus tearing off the top of a mountain, and hurling it into the sea, were a figurative mode of describing an eruption. The silence of this poem on the subject renders it not improbable, that for many ages preceding that in which it was written the volcano had been in a state of inaction.

The first eruption recorded in history is supposed to have taken place about 312 years before the Trojan war, or 1226 before Christ, and is said to have driven the Sicani from the eastern part of the island. Thucydides mentions three ; one of which, the second, began on the day that the battles of Plataea and Mycale were fought, and is noticed on the Arundel marbles. After the sixth eruption, Plato was invited by the younger Dionysius to examine the state of the mountain ; between which time and the battle of Pharsalia, it threw out flames and lava about 100 times. Of these eruptions the most singular in its consequences occurred in the first year of the ninety-sixth Olympiad : the Carthaginians, under Himilco, were

165.—Solinus : *Polyhistor*. xi.—Fazellus : *Sicular. Rer. Dec.* i. lib. ii. 4.—Brydone, *Tour through Sicily and Malta* : vol. i. p. 173.—Houel, *Voyage pittoresque de la Sicile, &c.*, vol. ii. p. 55.

* Strabo has made this distinction between the appearance of the mountain in summer and in winter :—*ἔστι δὲ ψιλὰ τὰ ἀνω χωρία καὶ τεφρώδη, καὶ χιόνος μετὰ τοῦ χειμῶνος.*—LIB. VI.

then marching from Naxos to Syracuse, but were stopped by the stream of lava, and compelled to go round by the western side of the mountain. The death of Julius Cæsar was preceded by an eruption inconsiderable in itself, but which proved, of course, a valuable addition to the prodigies, eclipses, and so forth, supposed to have foreshown that event; and in about eighty-four years after, Caligula was so terrified by another, that he fled from Messina, where he was then staying. The next in order, of any consequence, was that of A. D. 254, during which there fell on the tomb of Sant' Agata an enormous rock, said to bear an inscription, directing the Catanians to adopt her as their patroness, and make use of her veil to shield themselves from all future dangers. Godofredo of Viterbo records, that Charlemagne was present at that which took place A. D. 812, from which time history is silent regarding the volcano, until the year 1169: two more followed, in 1285 and 1323, but were surpassed in violence by that of 1329, of which some particulars are related by Nicolò Specoli. It commenced on June 23, and during the whole of the succeeding day, the sun was rendered invisible by dense clouds of smoke and ashes. The earth opened on the south side of the church of S. Giovanni, and sent forth flames to an astonishing height. This writer asserts, that independently of several thousand persons who lost their lives by the fiery discharges, many of the inhabitants died from fear, and that neither Babylon nor Sodom suffered so tremendous a visitation. During the next 322 years, there were about twenty eruptions; that of 1537 committed great ravages, but

the celebrated one of March, 1669, threw into insignificance all that preceded it.

For many days previous the sky had been overcast, and the weather, notwithstanding the season, oppressively hot. The thunder and lightning were incessant, and the eruption was at length ushered in by a violent shock of an earthquake, which levelled most of the houses at Nicolosi. Two great chasms then opened near that village, from whence ashes were thrown out in such quantities, that in a few weeks a double hill, called Monte Rosso, 450 feet high, was formed, and the surrounding country covered to such a depth, that nothing but the tops of the trees could be seen. The lava ran in a stream fifty feet deep, and four miles wide, overwhelming in its course fourteen towns and villages; and had it not separated before reaching Catania, that city would have been virtually annihilated as were Herculaneum and Pompeii. The walls had been purposely raised to a height of sixty feet, to repel the danger if possible, but the torrent accumulated behind them, and poured down in a cascade of fire upon the town. It still continued to advance, and after a course of fifteen miles ran into the sea, where it formed a mole 600 yards long. The walls were neither thrown down nor fused by contact with the ignited matter, and have since been discovered by Prince Biscari, when excavating in search of a well, known to have existed in a certain spot, and from the steps of which the lava may now be seen curling over like a monstrous billow in the very act of falling.

The great crater fell in during this eruption, and a fissure

six feet wide, and twelve miles long, opened in the plain of S. Leo. In the space of six weeks, the habitations of 27,000 persons were destroyed, a vast extent of the most fertile land rendered desolate for ages, the course of rivers changed,* and the whole face of the district transformed. Since that time there have been several eruptions, of which the most remarkable were those of 1787, 1811, and 1819, but the lava having seldom reached the cultivated region, the devastation committed was consequently trifling.

At an early hour in the morning we set out on our journey to the summit of the mountain, having previously engaged a weather-beaten guide named Antonio Gemmellaro. The ascent commences immediately on leaving the Piazza del Duomo, and from the barrier at a short distance beyond the termination of the Strada Stesicorea, there is a better view of Catania than can be obtained at any greater elevation. While paying the toll for the mules, the man who received it asked where we were going: "Fin' a doc," replied one of the party, pointing to the smoky crater of *Ætna*: "Me gnuri," rejoined the toll-keeper, "ccà fa cadd', ddà fa fridd;" a specimen of pure Sicilian, most grating to the "ears polite" of our Tuscan servant. The contrast between the utmost degree of fertility and an

* A singular brook called Giudicello, the *Amenanus* of the ancients, though so often diverted from its course, still traverses Catania, but has been sometimes known for several years to cease running above ground. Ovid alludes to this circumstance:

"Nec non Sicaniæ volvens *Amenanus* arenas
Nunc fluit, interdum suppressis fontibus aret."

MET. xv. 279.

equal extreme of desolation, is very striking in this ride; a few steps take one from groves of lemon trees and fields of Indian corn, to rugged sciaras, bare of verdure, or with at most an occasional prickly pear struggling for existence among the crevices. As we advanced, the prospect gradually extended over the southern part of the island, and before reaching Nicolosi we could see Syracuse, and the high ground beyond it.

At this stage we were to get fresh mules, having come thus far on our own, and while they were preparing, a message was sent to a certain Signor Gemmellaro, a namesake of our guide, requesting that the key of the Casa Inglese might be given to us. He refused to give the key, unless we took with us one of the five guides patronized by him. To this we were determined not to submit; and, finally, he consented to waive his objections, whatever they might have been.*

* We afterwards obtained a copy of his "Avvertimenti agli ospitandi nella casa sull' Etna," published in Italian, French, and English, by which it appeared, that we grievously offended against some of the "provisional regulations" therein "prescribed, authorized, and granted." We extract the following as a warning to future travellers: "According the afore mentioned articles nobody will take the liberty to go in the house and force the lock of the door he will really suffer the most severe punishments fixed against violence. Is not permitted to any body to put mules in the rooms designed for use of people notwithstanding the insufficiency of stables. It is forbidden likewise to dirtes the walls with pencil or coal M. G. will procure a blank book for those learned people curious to write their observation. It is likewise proper and just to reward M. Gem. for the expense of moveables, money &c. &c. and for the advantage travellers may get to examine the Volcan for better than Empedocli, Amodei, Fazelli, Brydon, Spallanzani, and great many others. M. Gemm. has lately been authorized to deny the key whenever is unkindly requested: He is also absolutely obliged to inform the Gen. of the Army who is determined to punish with rigor their insolence."

At half-past eleven o'clock we continued our march over a plain of fine ashes, the remains of the eruption of 1669, in which, notwithstanding the arid appearance, vines flourish most luxuriantly: they are kept low, as in France, and produce consequently a better and richer fruit, but not in such quantities as they would, if allowed to run up into wood. Monte Rosso was on our left, and in an hour and ten minutes we entered the woody region, the ascent through which was infinitely more steep and rugged than what we had already accomplished. The view was necessarily very contracted, except when occasionally a vista, formed in the forest by some lava stream, showed us the sloping base of the mountain studded with villages, and the blue and tranquil sea now far below us. The sun shone brightly, and the sky was unclouded, but the wind sighed mournfully through the branches of the old oaks under which we were passing. Many of these were evidently of a great age. In several places the lava had separated, leaving a green island in the middle covered with trees, amongst which a black rock might here and there be seen rising above the surrounding herbage. The soil is generally a dark brown earth, formed by the decomposition of scorix, and, where not too much shaded, produces grass and fern in abundance. In a little more than two hours we passed a hut called the Casa del Bosco, where persons are in the habit of resting, when the upper part of the mountain is too much covered with snow to admit of their stopping at the refuge near the foot of the cone. That, fortunately, was not now the case; we, therefore, proceeded a short distance further, to the Grotta de' Capri so called from its being the

resort of flocks of goats, but better known to the early climbers of *Ætna*, as the only shelter they could hope to find between Nicolosi and the summit. The older lava-courses abound with caves of this description, in many of which a solitary goatherd may be seen watching his charge, and playing on a reed, as in the days of Theocritus, or listlessly dozing away those sultry hours when none but "Englishmen and mad dogs" are abroad.

Here we halted for half an hour, to give the mules some barley, and listened to a warm discussion which had arisen between our three attendants, regarding the approaching marriage of our Catanian landlord's daughter to her own uncle. Our servant pronounced it to be *una cosa stravagante*, but the Sicilians seemed to think, that the only extravagant part of the proceeding was the eleven ounces and six tari* paid to his Holiness the Pope, for a dispensation.

We were nearly 5400 feet above the sea, and though it was not actually cold, the change of temperature was very sensibly felt by all. The thermometer at Catania stood at 81° in the shade the previous day at noon. It had already descended to 62°, and fell rapidly when we again set forward. The trees gradually dwindled in size as we approached the desert region, and ended as abruptly, and in as marked a line, as they had commenced at the lower edge of the forest. By far the most steep and disagreeable part of the ascent, with the exception of the cone, is that immediately succeeding the Bosco, but the mules contrived to scramble over the rocks, and soon

* Five pounds twelve shillings British.

brought us to the Piano del Lago, a large plain so called from the melted snow having once formed a lake in one of the hollows; and in a little more than two hours from leaving the Grotto de' Capri, we reached the Casa Inglese.

We had pushed on with the object of getting to the top of the cone before sunset, and lost no time in equipping ourselves for the walk. The thermometer stood at 43°, and I was somewhat sorry to find that my bag of warm clothing had been left behind. There being no remedy, we went off at once, over ground very disagreeable to get over, half lava and half ashes, and reached the top in forty-eight minutes.

Any description must fall short of the sight that burst upon us. There was not a cloud in the sky. The whole of Sicily, the south of Italy, all the Lipari Islands, and a vast extent of sea, lay beneath us as on a map, while across its smooth surface the sun cast the broad pyramidal shadow of the volcano, which lengthened and lengthened until lost in the distance. It gradually disappeared, and was succeeded by a perfect image of the mountain, thrown on the vapours above the horizon; the sky on each side retaining its pink hue, but the shadow assuming a greyish-blue colour. All the higher mountains were easily recognised, but the details of such a panorama are lost in its own immensity. Not only Mount Eryx, at the western extremity of Sicily, but the island of Maritimo, 160 miles off, and even the sea beyond it, were visible: Palermo was concealed by hills, but Monte Pellegrino, Calatabellota, and Monte S. Bonifacio, over Alcamo, were as clearly defined as if we had been within a few hours' ride of them. The straits of Messina on one side, and Syracuse on

the other, each about fifty miles distant, seemed almost under our feet.

The thermometer did not fall below 35°, yet having for some time past been accustomed to an extremely high temperature, we both felt the cold excessively. The wind had hitherto been high, but at the moment the sun began to sink below the horizon, it fell as if by enchantment; the air became perfectly motionless; not a sound broke upon the ear, and it seemed as if all nature were hushed in silent adoration of that Almighty Being, whose glorious works, spread beneath us, appeared to stretch into boundless space. The total solitude and the vastness of such a scene, the astonishing proofs of the creative, as well as the destructive power of the Deity, all combine, at such a moment, to force upon the mind the comparative nothingness of human existence; we feel like specks in the creation, and the thoughts involuntarily turn from so humiliating a reflection, to the certainty, that when all that we survey shall have crumbled into dust, and when time itself shall be no more, we shall have entered on a new and eternal state.

Every spot on which the eye now rested had been hallowed by poetic or historical association; either as the resort of those fabled beings, who were once supposed to exercise so powerful an influence over the destinies of mankind; as the field where liberty triumphed over lawless oppression; as the poet's cradle or the patriot's grave; as recalling all that can dignify and adorn human nature; or as proclaiming the irresistible decree, that not only genius, virtue, glory, empires, but even the earth itself, shall pass away.

Darkness coming on, we left the summit, and retraced our

steps to the Refuge, which bears the following inscription carved on a stone over the door :—

“ÆTNAM PERLUSTRANTIBUS

HAS ÆDES

BRITANNI IN SICILIA

ANNO SALUTIS MDCCCXI.”

This wretched hut, in which Dr. Irvine, in his Letters on Sicily, says, no man in England would be hard-hearted enough to keep his cow, was erected at the expense of some British officers, during the military occupation of the island. It contains three small rooms and a stable; the walls are built of lava, and the roof is covered with flat slabs of the same material. The furniture consists of a few chairs, and a large wooden bench, such as may be seen in guard-rooms, on which those who can may sleep. The stable is seldom used, for the change of temperature is so great, that the guides prefer taking their mules down to the house in the forest, rather than risk their dying of cold. That their apprehensions are not groundless is evident from the bones strewed over the Piano del Lago.

A fire had been kindled on the floor, with charcoal brought from Nicolosi, and certain grilled fowls and other matters having been disposed of, we went out, leaving our two domestics to enjoy themselves. The night was fine, and the stars glittered with an unusual degree of brilliancy. Their number seemed increased ten-fold; the satellites of Jupiter were distinctly visible to the naked eye, and the Milky Way appeared like a sheet of very bright light stretching across an ebony

sky. The cold was, however, too powerful a drawback on the pleasure of star-gazing, to allow of our remaining long in the open air : we returned, therefore, into the hut, and sat round the fire smoking our pipes, and scorching our feet, in the vain attempt to keep ourselves warm.

The night was far advanced before we retired to the wretched room where we were to sleep, and in which the only furniture was the bench mentioned above. The cloaks and additional clothing belonging to me had been left behind at Catania, by which oversight a division of the remainder was rendered necessary : the only things available as pillows were a piece of lava and a coil of ropes, the latter of which, as being the softer, was assigned to him who acted the part of St. Martin to his companion. We then lay down on the boards, having previously in vain endeavoured to persuade the guide and servant, for their own sakes, to extinguish the fire in the room where they were to remain. The former replied, that he had often slept there with even a larger fire ; that there were plenty of chinks to let in the air, and that he would sooner have a headach than be frozen. Providentially for them, the cold awoke us at two o'clock, and finding it impossible to sleep any more, we got up, and on entering the next room, found it filled with the smoke of burned leather, proceeding from the guide's shoes, which were roasting. When called, the man did not answer, nor did he move even when kicked, and it was not till he had been well shaken that he showed any sign of animation. He quickly recovered his senses when the door was opened, and fresh air admitted, but the servant could neither stand nor speak for a considerable

time, and continued for nearly an hour in a succession of fainting fits. Upon inquiry it came out, that not content with the embers we had left burning, and from which probably the greater portion of the gas had already escaped, they had, before lying down to sleep, thrown on a large quantity of fresh charcoal ; a piece of rashness of which the guide confessed he had never before been guilty.

September 20th.—The time having at length arrived for completing the object of our expedition, by seeing the sun rise, we left the hut a few minutes before five o'clock, accompanied by the guide, for whom a walk was about the best remedy. A faint streak of red appeared in the east, but it was still dark, and we should have found the same difficulty in crossing the rough plain of lava as on the preceding evening, had it not been for the moon. It became light, however, as we ascended, and in forty minutes we reached the summit, and sat down on the highest point. The horizon was clear, excepting a small part, which unfortunately was precisely in the direction of Malta, but a thin light vapour was rolling over the valleys and low grounds. This, however, gradually disappeared, and the increasing brightness of the sky announced the approach of the moment to which we had so anxiously looked forward. The sun at length appeared, in unclouded majesty, rising as it were out of the sea : we watched it till its whole disk was above the horizon, and then, turning round, saw the image of the mountain, that we had before observed in the east, now as distinctly figured in the opposite direction. It continued visible for fifteen minutes, and was then succeeded by the pyramidal shadow, stretching in the present instance across

the land, as it had at sunset across the sea.* The atmosphere had now assumed that brilliant transparency unknown to northern climates, and of which no description can convey any adequate idea to those who have never witnessed it. With this advantage we followed without difficulty the various windings of the coast of Italy to a considerable distance beyond Policastro, and, looking over Calabria, saw the gulf of Taranto sparkling in the sun, and the rugged outline of the mountains of the Terra di Lecce, 245 miles off, darkly traced against the sky.†

* The thermometer at sun-rise stood at 34°.

† We are aware that, in making this assertion, we shall expose ourselves to the charge, not, we should hope, of romancing, but of fancying that we saw what, it may be said, it was impossible we could have seen. The object before us was, however, too distinct to allow us to distrust our senses; the shores of the Gulf of Taranto were equally visible, and unless, therefore, clouds had intervened, which was not the case, there could have been no natural impediment to our seeing land sufficiently elevated to make up for the increased distance. Refraction depends so entirely upon the state of the atmosphere, that it would be difficult to decide what can or cannot be seen, under favourable circumstances, from a given point. A celebrated eastern traveller confidently asserts that he saw the snowy peak of Mount Ararat, the height of which is 9,500 feet, at the distance of 240 miles; and it is well known to those who have passed any time at Malta, that some houses on the shore of Sicily are visible, in clear weather, from the signal station over the Governor's palace. The height of that point above the sea is 250 feet.

The height of *Ætna* above the level of the sea, as trigonometrically measured by Captain Smyth, is as follows:—

| | Feet. |
|---|-------|
| The summit, | 10874 |
| Foot of the cone, | 9760 |
| Casa Inglese, | 9592 |
| Highest part of the woody region, | 6279 |
| Grotta de' Capri, | 5362 |
| Nicolosi convent, | 2449 |

The appearance of *Ætna* itself from this central point would alone repay a journey to the summit; the relative position of every town and village is seen at once; innumerable cones rear their tufted heads from amongst the old oaks of the woody region; while streams of lava, radiating in every direction, traverse the forest like black roads, the highways of destruction to the country beneath.

But indescribably grand as the spectacle unquestionably was, it wanted that solemnity which so forcibly affected the imagination at sunset. The stillness of the air, the lengthening shadows, the fading light, and the dark sea rolling its mysterious waves into the unseen distance, all heightened at that hour the sublimity of the scene. Now, on the contrary, every object was glittering in the broad glare of daylight; nothing was left to the imagination, and the impressiveness of the scene was impaired in the same proportion that its splendour was enhanced. Each period has, however, its peculiar charm, and though romance was now absorbed in reality, we watched with interest the magical effect produced by the rays of the sun striking in succession the summits of the mountains far below, and then, having risen higher in the heavens, chasing the lingering shadows from the valleys, and bringing back to life the diversified beauties of this stupendous and unrivalled picture.

Barometrical measurement is from its nature very incorrect, and can only be regarded as an approximation; it is therefore a singular coincidence that Sir John Herschel, who adopted that method of estimating the height of the mountain, should have differed from the authority quoted above by only one foot and a half. The result of his observations for the highest point of the *Bicorno* is 10,872½ feet.

We next turned to survey the crater, and, descending from a kind of knoll on which we had hitherto stood, walked round the southern edge. A great deal of smoke issued from the rents and crevices in the sides, and the heat was at such spots very perceptible, but there was no fiery chasm down which we might have precipitated ourselves, had we been inclined to follow the example of Empedocles. The aperture had been entirely closed up by the rolling back of the detached fragments of lava, subsequent to a slight eruption that took place in April, 1831; and the bottom of the crater exhibited only a confused assemblage of mounds of black, brown, and red rocks, like the rubbish of some quarry in the infernal regions.

The sides were generally precipitous, and we scrambled down, annoyed only by the smoke, which rose thickly from the sulphur everywhere scattered round, and prettier to look at, from the variety and brilliancy of its colours, than agreeable to walk through.

The crater, as nearly as we could judge, varies in depth from 200 to about 400 feet, the loftiest point of the surrounding ridge being towards the north-west, and, when Captain Smyth visited it, was 493 yards in diameter; since which time, the numerous changes that must have taken place seem, in that respect, not to have altered its dimensions. Its circumference is less than that of the crater of Vesuvius, but from the greater fluidity of the lavas of the latter, when in a state of fusion, the appearance there presented is not so broken and chaotic as that described above.

Finding but little to reward our trouble, we picked up a few pieces of lava as relics, and regained without difficulty the

spot from whence we had descended. Pausing for an instant to take a parting glance at the grandest and most striking scene that our eyes ever gazed upon, we left the summit, and turned our steps once more towards Catania.

The path we took was different from that by which we had ascended, and at some distance from the foot of the cone we passed a quantity of snow covered with the scorix thrown out during a succession of eruptions. It was perfectly hard, and will probably remain in that state for many years, as, from the thickness of the stratum of ashes, it would resist even the heat of a stream of lava running over it.*

After a short delay at the Casa Inglese, we resumed our journey, and again crossing the Piano del Lago, stopped for a few minutes at the Torre del Filosofo, a ruin deriving its name from the tradition, that Empedocles resorted thither to carry on his philosophical observations. So little of it now remains, that it is not easy to say what it may have been, but the general opinion is, that it was erected for the accommodation of the Emperor Hadrian, on the occasion of his visiting the mountain.

A few steps brought us from thence to the edge of the Val del Bove, a prodigious ravine five miles broad, and enclosed on three sides by precipices rising at the upper extremity to the height of 3000 feet. A more magnificent scene of desolation no fancy could create; scarped rocks, fire triumphant,

* Incredible as this may appear, it has been known to occur in more than one instance; and during a scarcity of snow, caused by the unusual heat in the autumn of 1828, the magistrates of Catania employed men to quarry through the lava, for the purpose of procuring snow to supply the town.

and all that is terrible in nature, are here brought at once before the eye. Immediately beneath where we stood were the cones thrown up in 1811 and 1819, from the latter of which a vast stream of lava issued, flowing along the bottom of the valley, until it reached a precipice at the head of the Val di Calanna, where it poured over with inconceivable violence in a cascade many hundred yards wide. The nearly perpendicular sides of the chasm exhibit to the geologist most interesting sections of the internal structure of the mountain, but no ingenuity has yet succeeded in accounting for so singular a break in the otherwise symmetrical form of the great cone. It has no appearance whatever of having been a crater, and there are many reasons for doubting that it was occasioned either by subsidence or the denuding action of floods.

We now took leave of the upper regions of *Ætna*, as we imagined, for ever, and continued our descent toward Nicolosi. Upon arriving within a short distance of that place, we dismounted from our mules, and turned off in the direction of Monte Rosso, for the purpose of descending into the Fossa della Palomba, one of the numerous caverns formed, it is conjectured, by the hardening of the lava during the escape of great volumes of elastic fluids, which are often discharged after the crisis of an eruption is over.

Finding that the men who were to assist us in the expedition had not appeared, we walked up the hill, the height of which, as before mentioned, is 450 feet. A few plants have already taken root on the lower part of the cone, but the summit is bare and of a dusky red colour. The surface consists generally of ashes nearly as fine as sand, but rising

above it in several places are jagged points of lava of the brightest scarlet. There are two craters, the apertures at the bottom of which, as in most other instances, have gradually been closed up.

The people whom we had expected having arrived, we hastened to join them, and found everything in readiness for our subterranean journey. The entrance to the cavern is at the bottom of a large hollow, in some measure resembling a crater, and thus far we proceeded without any difficulty. A ladder was then placed in the hole, for such in truth it is, and having descended about ten feet, torches were lighted, and an uncouth-looking personage, clad in sheep-skins, led the way down a rapid and extremely rugged declivity. The height of the vault increased as we advanced, but it did not in any part appear to be broader than fifteen or sixteen yards.

Daylight had now completely failed, and at the foot of the slope a rude sort of windlass had been erected, hanging over the brink of a vertical descent of eighty feet. The rope having been adjusted, and a short thick stick made fast to the end, our conductor seated himself on it, and was lowered to the bottom. While standing there to receive us, and waving the torch over his head, the red glare, as it fell on the black and deeply indented sides of the chasm, produced so strange an effect, that it would have required no great stretch of imagination to convert him into a demon, who was ushering us on our way to the realms of darkness. That fortunately was not the case, and, the rope having been drawn up again, we followed in turn, and scrambled on through a much loftier and more spacious part of the cavern than that above. Our

progress was a good deal impeded by being obliged to carry the ladder with us, but as there were still several places where we should have occasion to use it, it could not be dispensed with.

Having at length descended about 200 feet, and passed through a series of galleries, we came to a spot where the vault rose as abruptly as the shaft of a mine, and to such a height that the top could no longer be discerned. We had no means of ascertaining the fact, but from the direction of the grotto, and the distance we had come, it seemed not improbable that we were now under the smaller crater of Monte Rosso, in which case this might have been the vent to it.

Our further progress was now nearly at an end, and leaving the principal gallery, we entered a narrow chamber, at the termination of which lay a marble slab with this inscription:—"M. Gemmellaro primus ima hæc in Tartara venit, Anno MDCCCXXIII." Not satisfied with that, we carefully examined every nook, in the hope of discovering some chink that might lead us onwards, but in vain; there was not even a crevice through which a lady could have squeezed her little finger. The sides and roof of the cavern were as rugged as the surface on which we stood, jutting out and receding in every possible variety of form, which, added to their black colour, but partially illuminated by the flickering light of the torches, gave to the whole scene a singularly dismal and sepulchral appearance. Numbers of bats, hanging in "drowsy clusters," had sheltered themselves beneath the projecting ledges of lava, from the dropping water which had already drenched us; but while trying to discover in what manner they were

suspended to each other, we were startled by the eternal exclamation of "Santu Diavulu" from the guide, who had let his torch fall into a pool of water. We still most fortunately had the end of another, but so short that it could only be carried between two stones, and rapid as was our retreat, it went out before we had regained the spot where the rope was hanging to pull us up again. We found it notwithstanding, but when the first who ascended was in mid-air, some accident happened to the windlass, and left him "dangling like a flask of wine let down to cool in a well:" a fate which all those must risk who disregard the sage advice of Sancho Panza to his master at the cave of Montesinos.* The damage was at length repaired, and a few minutes restored us, wet, scratched, and dirty, to the light and air of heaven.

Upon arriving at Nicolosi, we called on Signor Gemmellaro, for the double purpose of returning the key of the Casa Inglese, and of seeing the man who had dived into the "ima Tartara" of the mountain, who had erected mile-stones across the desert region, and who, in short, seemed to have usurped the ancient domains of Antiphates and Polyphemus. Our previous conceptions were by no means realized, for instead of the hardy, adventurous person we had expected to see, we were most cordially received by a fat, elderly, little gentleman, who had evidently forgotten the discussion of the preceding day. He was so well acquainted with every part of *Ætna*, that

* "Mire vuesa merced, señor mio, lo que hace, no se quiera sepultar en vida, ni se ponga adonde parezca frasco que le ponen á enfriar en algun pozo: sí, que á vuesa merced no le toca ni atañe ser el escudriñador desta que debe de ser peor que mazmorra."—DON QUIXOTE, Parte II. cap. xxii.

his conversation was highly interesting. The walls of his room were hung with barometers, maps of *Ætna*, and sketches of the different eruptions; and his library seemed exclusively to consist of books having relation to the subject of which his head was so full.

There was now nothing further to detain us; we had seen *Ætna* under circumstances more favourable than we could almost have ventured to hope, and returned to Catania in the evening, as pleased and fatigued as the most enthusiastic traveller could desire to be.*

* The distance from Catania to the summit of *Ætna* is computed at twenty-eight Sicilian miles, to accomplish which we took, in ascending, seven hours and a quarter, in descending, six hours and twenty minutes.

CHAPTER IX.

CATANIAN CLUB.—NEWSPAPERS.—SCALA D'ACI.—SCOGLI DEI CICLOPI.—
 DEPARTURE FROM CATANIA.—LENTINI.—SANTA CROCE.—SCALA
 GRECA.—ARRIVAL AT SYRACUSE.

WE determined on devoting the following day to the *dolce far niente*, and our landlord of the Corona volunteering to procure for us an introduction to a club, where he said we should find newspapers and society, we were not sorry to avail ourselves of the offer, and so pass the morning. We soon perceived, however, that, even when reckoning *with* their host, people may occasionally be disappointed, for the society consisted of but four persons, who were playing cards with too much eagerness to think of us, and the only paper was the solitary Palermo Journal, containing nothing but the movements of the Court, notices of religious festivals, and a few third-hand extracts from the “well-regulated” journals of Vienna. Such in truth may be taken as a fair abstract of the intelligence published in the papers throughout Italy, but more especially in the dominions of the Pope, and those of the King of Naples. The *notizie estere* generally come first, giving a few dry and uninteresting details, such, for instance, as the arrival in London of a special envoy from the Court of St. Petersburg, bearing letters which had been most gra-

ciously received by the British Sovereign ; or, that "the message of the President of the United States gave great satisfaction, inasmuch as it explained, in the clearest and most perspicuous manner, everything conducive to the advantage of the nation, both in regard to its foreign and domestic policy."* But what those advantages may be is left to the imagination of the reader. To that succeeds perhaps a royal ordonnance, commanding that the undress frock-coats of the officers of the line should reach two inches below the knee; and the remainder of the sheet, generally 'half, is filled with the important notices of new operas, or an account of the procession of Corpus Domini, at which the King "assisted," bearing a candle in his hand; or, if in the case of the Pope, that his Holiness had proceeded to the church of Sta. Maria Maggiore, escorted by the *guardia nobile*, had celebrated Mass, and returned to the Vatican amidst the discharge of cannon from the castle of St. Angelo. But of the actual condition of Italy, or of any other country, not a word is said ; no utopian theories are permitted ; the pith is extracted from the cautiously received scraps of foreign intelligence, and all that relates to the state of parties, the march of liberalism, or to any occasional struggle for independence, is hushed in silence as profound as that of the grave. Goldsmith, in his "Citizen of the World," gives a humorous account of papers of this description; and the quotations supposed to be extracted from

* This is a literal translation of the leading paragraph from an old number of the *Giornale del Regno delle Due Sicilie*, the only newspaper published in the continental dominions of the King of Naples.

them, are hardly more absurd than what may often really be found at present.

But, while stating this, I am far from wishing it to be understood that, in my opinion, either the King of Naples or the Pope, situated as they are, are pursuing a mistaken line of policy ; force on the one hand, and ignorance on the other, are the conditions by which they hold their respective governments, and were light once permitted to dawn upon the mind of the subject, or were the iron grasp of the ruler relaxed but for a moment, the whole system would crumble into dust. That it will do so at no very distant period can scarcely be doubted, but the attempt to repair what is too rotten to bear touching would only accelerate the catastrophe. A radical change, or, to call it by its real name, a revolution, might unquestionably be effected, but scarcely without the ruin of those who projected it : for there is no precedent in the history of mankind, where a nation, bowed down by tyranny—indifferent, in the mass, to all but the pursuit of pleasure—and sunk in every respect to the lowest pitch of moral degradation, has been enabled to retrace its steps and regain the point whence it had fallen, without the severe discipline of a long and convulsive struggle. From such a fermentation alone can Italy expect a restoration to her former greatness and place among nations ; the necessity for individual exertion would then give a new tone to society, and by reviving that energy without which liberty is a dead letter, and constitutional government an impossibility, would, in the course of years, produce a race of men capable of ap-

preciating the blessings of the one, and of submitting to the wholesome restraints of the other.

September 22.—We had now been nearly a week at Catania, and were most anxious to proceed on our journey, but other interests, as well as our own convenience, were to be consulted, and the day of departure was therefore postponed. There were still some remarkable places in the vicinity not yet visited, and on the second morning after our descent from *Ætna*, we set out on an excursion to the *Scala d'Aci*. The road, if such it could be called, wound along the flank of the mountain at a considerable distance above the shore, and through a country alternately sterile and highly cultivated, such as has already been so often described. We passed several large villages, and among the rest Catena, where, notwithstanding the early hour, some people were screaming and quarrelling over their cards in a caffè open to the street. The passion for gambling is carried to an extent in this country that would surprise even a frequenter of Crockford's: it is by no means confined to the upper classes, nor is it abandoned by those who have no money to lose, for when all is gone, they stake their future earnings.

Leaving Catena we began to descend towards the sea, and after a ride of three hours reached Aci Reale, one of the prettiest and cleanest towns we had seen. The "*scala*" is immediately below the town; it is a winding road supported on arches, and built against the face of a cliff 700 or 800 feet high. The section of a part of the base of the mountain here exposed to view is rather celebrated, having given rise to some

ingenious, but fallacious theories. No less than ten distinct strata of lava, with intermediate layers of earth, may be observed, but that any sure data could be derived from thence, on which to determine the length of time that has elapsed since the first of those, seems at least problematical.

A heavy shower of rain interrupted our speculations; and before we could reach a house, our light clothing had become so soaked, that shelter was no longer of any use, and after walking down to the port we returned to Aci Reale, and mounting our mules, rode back towards Catania.

September 23.—This day was the last which we could devote to this interesting part of Sicily, and at an early hour we embarked in a small boat for the Scogli de' Ciclopi, or, as they are otherwise called, Faraglioni; several small islands or rocks about five miles north of Catania. The black cliffs under which we rowed have been worn by the action of the water into the most grotesque forms, and abound with caverns, the roofs of which are in some instances supported by square pillars, with angles as sharp as if they were the production of art. We passed the once spacious harbour, where, according to tradition, Ulysses anchored on his return from Troy, but which is now reduced to an insignificant cove, having been almost filled up by a stream of lava in 1381. Beyond that is the singular rock crowned by the ruined fortress of Aci Castello; and in an hour after leaving Catania we reached a small bay, taking its name from the miserable fishing village of Trizza, immediately off which are the islands before alluded to.

The first presents nothing very striking, but the second,

a lofty pyramidal rock, is supposed by those who would find a scene for every imaginary tale of the poets, to have been the spot where Polyphemus sat pouring forth his amorous rhapsodies, in the vain expectation of charming the obdurate Galatea. To the north of it, and at no great distance, is the most remarkable of the group: it is about 200 feet high, and consists principally of a mass of columnar lava, in prisms of from four to eight sides, resembling very much those of the Giant's Causeway in Ireland, but less regular in their form. There is, however, this peculiarity about them, that instead of standing as it were in ranks, they are divided into groups of five or six, with a central column to each set. They vary in diameter from eight to twenty inches, and the interstices are filled with a hard calcareous substance, enclosing a multitude of fossil shells, many of which species are now found in the Mediterranean. The summit and northern side of the island are composed of stratified marl, resting upon, and apparently heaved up by the lava beneath. A deep fissure, penetrating to some distance, exposes to view the singular manner in which the basalt has cut into the clay, forcing it into the most extraordinary and fantastic contortions. The two substances are almost equally hard, and, though sufficiently distinct to the eye, are so firmly united as not to be separated unless by the stroke of a hammer, or other forcible methods.

Advancing still further, we came to the Isola d'Aci, which, though not half a mile in circumference, is larger than the other Scogli de' Ciclopi, but not generally included among them. Whether it is of earlier origin than those already described is uncertain, but its more advanced decomposition

admits of the cultivation of some vines and barilla ; and from the remains of buildings, it would seem that it was formerly inhabited. It does not rise more than forty or fifty feet above the water, and, as in the case of the other island, consists of a substratum of lava, capped with a thick layer of indurated marl.

Having landed, we walked up a hill strewn in every direction with prostrate basaltic pillars, of much greater size than those previously mentioned, and resembling in colour, but closer grained than, the iron-grey lava spotted with black, that may be seen in the quarries near the old castle at Catania. From thence we proceeded through Trizza to Aci Castello, a distance of two miles, escorted by a mob of ragged boys and hideous old women, craving charity, which, when bestowed, did not rid us of their company. The fortress that gives name to the village occupies the summit of a lofty rock, very singular in its structure. Besides the columnar basalt usually met with, it contains globular and cylindrical masses of the same substance, the latter hollow up the middle. Some of these long tubes are curved, but the greater number are straight, and they are found standing vertically, as well as piled horizontally above each other like logs of wood.

The castle itself is in too dilapidated a condition to serve any other purpose than that of a prison ; the common use to which such buildings are applied in countries where the government has rendered itself too contemptible to have any enemies but its own citizens. We passed over the tottering remains of a drawbridge, and ascended the tower to gain a more extended view of the Bay of Trizza than we had hitherto

obtained, and of the scene where Leptines, the Syracusan admiral, relying upon the separation of the land and sea forces of the Carthaginians, occasioned by an eruption of *Ætna*, attacked the wary Mago, and was defeated with the loss of 100 galleys, and more than 20,000 men.

Our last evening was spent in taking a farewell stroll through the streets and squares of the city, which, though they did not exhibit much "rank and fashion," swarmed with the carriages of citizens who had issued forth to enjoy their Sunday's drive, accompanied by their wives, children, and dogs, and, in short, by their whole domestic establishment, not omitting the nurse, who, in this country, is a very important and consequential personage. The dress of the females who affected French fashions and *ton* was in the worst possible taste; at once gaudy and shabby, and surpassing the rainbow in variety of colours. However, many of the younger ladies had prudently retained the old costume of the province, so infinitely better suited to their slight figures and Grecian style of countenance, than any fantastic sleeves or caps à la Marie Stuart. This dress consists of a long mantle of black silk, confined by a ribbon at the waist, and open in front; it is generally plain, but occasionally fringed with gold or silver lace, and subdues, without concealing, the bright colours of the gown over which it is worn. The hair is drawn back across the temples, and as a cap or bonnet would be inadmissible, the hood is always kept up, but unfortunately too far back on the head to intercept the dangerous glances of the dark eyes that sparkle beneath it.

Of the state of society at Catania I cannot venture to offer

an opinion, for, in consequence of the season at which we were there, not one of the persons to whom we had brought letters of introduction was in the place, and, even had such not been the case, our stay was too limited for visiting. The Catanians have, however, the reputation of being courteous and hospitable to strangers, they are addicted to literary and scientific pursuits, and consequently less frivolous and profligate in their habits than the nobility of the capital. They have on several occasions shown themselves forward in discouraging the ignorant prejudices of the other Sicilians, especially with regard to inoculation for the small-pox, which was practised here not many years after Lady Mary Wortley Montague introduced it into England. They were also the first to promote the cultivation of the potato on their estates, while their neighbours were altogether opposed to that invaluable root: a fact which could not fail to raise them in *our* estimation.

September 24.—The morning of our departure at length arrived, and after a parting conversation with our landlord, whose compliments were as extravagant as his bill, we left Catania by the same gate at which we had entered, and were soon once more upon the plain. We had the choice of three roads to Syracuse: the inland route by Lentini; that by Augusta and the sea-shore; or the more direct one, not passing through any town. We took the first, and after riding for an hour and three-quarters, reached the Giarretta, the Symæthus of earlier times, and one of the largest rivers in the island. We crossed its muddy stream* in a ferry boat, and soon after

* "Rapidi vada flava Symæthi."—*SIL. ITAL.* xiv. 231.

began to ascend the high ground bordering the plain. The marshes on our left, as we rode along, abound with wild-fowl, in the slaughter of which not a few persons appeared to be engaged, for the shots were incessant.

We had not commenced our march till near noon, and evening was approaching when we entered Lentini, eighteen miles from Catania. The town stands at the foot and on the declivity of a hill, and occupies part of the site of the ancient Leontium, but has suffered so much from earthquakes and other causes, that it retains no memorials of its former importance. It is principally known in history as having been the ostensible cause of the unfortunate expedition against Syracuse, and of the consequent downfall of the Athenian power.

To the north-west of the town is a large sheet of water called Bivieri, in winter about twenty miles in circumference, but much less in the summer. The noxious exhalations arising from the muddy flats of the lake on one side, and from the marshes on the other, render Lentini unhealthy at this season of the year. The evil is at present much greater than it once was, for a Prince of Butera, under pretence that the admission of more water into the lake would force a passage to the sea, and drain the adjacent lands, obtained leave from the King to turn a stream into it, which, spreading over the surrounding marshes, increased the means of breeding fish, from which his successors still derive a considerable revenue, but had otherwise an effect the reverse of that predicted.

On the top of the hill overlooking Lentini, and at the distance of two miles, with a valley intervening, stands Carlentini, a town intended by its founder, Charles V., as the

head-quarters of his Sicilian troops, but the fortifications were never completed, and the place, having been subsequently neglected, has dwindled into a miserable village, with a population of about 2000 persons. Thither we proceeded to pass the night, and pitched our tent in a retired angle of the wall, overhung by some old olive trees. Scarcely had we established ourselves when we were surrounded by a crowd of the inhabitants, amongst whom were the priest, the lawyer, the doctor of the village, and several monks. Although we did not object to admitting as many as wished to view our internal arrangements, it eventually required something more forcible than words, to deter the more curious of the party from slackening the cords, and letting the tent down upon our heads. They remained gazing at us till dark, and were succeeded by a band of wretched musicians.

The heat of the day was followed by a calm and beautiful night. There was no moon, but the stars shone brightly; the air was cool and motionless, and the fire-flies, sparkling for an instant, flitted among the trees, and then disappeared, while the low chirp of the *grilli* alone disturbed the silence that reigned around. Rolled up in our cloaks, to keep off the heavy dew that was falling, we sat beside our wood fire, enjoying the hour, and listening to the interminable histories of the muleteers.

September 25.—Before the sun had risen, we discovered by the chattering outside, that the village had again poured forth its horde of idlers to annoy us with their company, but we had been more on the alert than they, and

they scarcely had time to examine the coffee-pot and frying-pan, when the tent was struck, thrust into a bag, and put on a mule's back, and in a few minutes the only sign of our having been at Carlentini were a few embers not then quite extinguished. The baggage was sent off towards Syracuse, but we descended in the contrary direction, for the purpose of visiting a ruin on the height above Lentini. The eastern side of the valley is overgrown with pomegranate, olive, and fig trees. The hill to the westward, though partially covered with trees, is more precipitous, and the rocks contain a series of excavations resembling on a small scale those that we afterwards saw at Ispica. Tradition represents them as the abode of the Læstrygones, who were among the earliest inhabitants of Sicily, but a legendary tale relating to a people said to have lived 3000 years ago is not entitled to much credit. On the crag above these Cimmerian dwellings are the remains of the fortress that we had seen from the opposite side of the valley, but whether a work of the middle ages, or of some earlier period, we could not ascertain. It is built of large hewn stones, and from its situation might have been the acropolis of Leontium, for, though the walls are now of no great height, it was evidently a place of considerable strength.

Standing on this elevated point, we were enabled to trace our line of march almost from the day of our landing in Sicily: Castro-Giovanni was on the left, at the distance of forty-five miles; the land on the right stretched away towards Messina, while the plain of Catania, backed by the colossal *Ætna*, filled up the centre. We turned from it with some-

thing of the feeling with which a man leaves a friend whom he never more expects to see, and, again crossing the valley, resumed our journey towards Syracuse.

The hills composing the range on which Carlentini stands, are, in some measure, of volcanic origin, but of so early a date, that the pozzolana and dikes of lava, which penetrate them in every direction, are found beneath the calcareous rock. This singular phenomenon may be observed in many places on the road to Augusta, and in other parts of the Val di Noto, where the volcanic strata appear, capped by limestone several hundred feet thick.

The first part of our ride was over extremely rugged and hilly ground, but better wooded than is usual in this country, and intersected by the Cantara, formerly the Alabus, and other streams.

About three miles from Carlentini we passed the ruin of a small building, supposed to have been a triumphal monument; part of the shafts of two fluted Doric half-pillars, with the wall behind, and a basement of several courses of hewn stone, are all that remain. Beyond that, we wound our way for an hour or two through a succession of copses, consisting of myrtle, woodbine, rhododendron, the castor-oil shrub, and a variety of others, the names of which baffled our botanical knowledge.

Leaving Mililli between us and the sea, we came in sight of the bay and town of Augusta, and of cape Santa Croce. The former, anciently called Xiphona, was the refuge for the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem after their expulsion from Rhodes, and before the island of Malta was handed over to

them. The latter is not a little celebrated in Sicilian annals, as the spot where the Empress Helena landed from Jerusalem with the true cross. Many bulls have been promulgated to enforce, as it were, the authenticity of this relic, so that curiosity is excited to ascertain how far the papal declarations are entitled to credit; for, supposing its identity to be clearly established, there are few persons, of whatever persuasion, who could regard without extreme interest, not to say veneration, even the smallest particle of that cross on which the great expiatory sacrifice was completed. With an orthodox Roman Catholic, the mere *ipse dixit* of the head of his Church must be conclusive; but with others the case is different, for, as Erasmus justly remarks in one of his letters, "a well-informed mind is easily led by reason, but does not readily submit to authority." The manner in which the cross was said to have been discovered is as follows: the Empress Helena, then in her eightieth year, being at Jerusalem three centuries after the Crucifixion, and having failed in every attempt to recover the precious relic, caused some of the Jews to be tortured: the result was, that they contrived to produce three crosses, but were unable to point out with certainty that one upon which our Saviour suffered. Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, got rid of the dilemma, by suggesting that a woman afflicted with an incurable disorder should be touched by the three crosses. The two first were found to possess no virtue; but no sooner had the last, and of course the true one, been placed in contact with her, than she was made whole. The doting old Empress then returned to Rome with a part of it, and a church was erected on Mount Calvary for the preservation of

the remainder. But how this sacred talisman, so soon divided and dispersed over Europe, and a piece of which Charlemagne wore round his neck, can be identified with another captured by Khosroes, recovered by Heraclius, taken again in the battle of Tiberias, 373 years after Charlemagne's death, and restored to the Crusaders in 1204, the oracles of the Vatican have never condescended to explain. That it was not the remnant left behind by the innkeeper's canonized daughter* is certain. Yet both crosses, as far as papal bulls can make them so, are equally genuine; perhaps they are also equally spurious; still they have the rust of time about them, and when we know that they were objects of veneration to a train of heroes, and were carried to battle as the rallying point and promise of victory to our ancestors in the Crusades, we cannot but regard them with a feeling of deep interest, convinced though we may be of their never having existed at that hour when "the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent."

We had been for some hours gradually approaching the sea, and, a few miles beyond Mililli, passed close to the peninsula of Magnisi, the "low-lying Thapsus" of Virgil, where the Athenians landed previous to their attack on Epipolæ. The plain between this and the hills on the right was the site of several towns, and among the rest of Hybla Parva, or, as it was afterwards called, Megara, so celebrated among the an-

* We may be wrong in assigning so low an origin to the Empress, for though she is generally represented as the daughter of an innkeeper at Drepanum, Quaresmius says, that her father was a British prince:—"Filia fuit unius Britanniae Reguli, Coel nomine."

cients for the honey produced in its neighbourhood,* and which rivalled that of Mount Hymettus in Attica.† It still preserves its reputation, for though the town that gave name to the hills has passed from the face of the earth, they are covered as they ever were with wild thyme, the favourite food of the bees.

The long rocky boundary of the elevated platform on which Syracuse formerly stood now rose before us like a wall; but, previous to reaching it, we stopped for a few minutes at the foot of a monument, supposed by some to have been erected by Marcellus, in commemoration of his successful siege; or, as others say, in honour of Archimedes, and surmounted originally by a sphere. It consists of a base about eighteen feet square, the shattered ruin of what was probably once a column now remaining on the top; but there seems little reason for conjecturing it to have been a trophy, beyond the mere circumstance of the Romans having had their camp on the spot. The rest of the plain is strewn with large blocks of stone, either the remains of the villages of Leon and Trogilus, or possibly of the materials brought thither by the Athenians

* Τὸ δὲ τῆς Ὑβλης ὄνομα συμφέρει διὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῦ Ὑβλαιου μέλιτος.—
STRAB. VI.

“Africa quot segetes, quot Tmolia terra racemos,
Quot Sicyon baccas, quot parit Hybla favos.”

OVID. EPIST. EX PONT. IV. XV. 9.

“Melle novo gravidas mitis videt Hybla catervas.”

STAT. ACHIL. I. 557.

† “Tum quæ nectareis vocat ad certamen Hymetton
Audax Hybla favis.”

SIL. ITAL. XIV. 199.

for the purpose of completing the wall for blockading Syracuse; a design which, unfortunately for them, was frustrated by Gylippus, the Lacedæmonian general.

Ascending by the Scala Greca, an old winding road cut in the rock, we entered upon the site of this once great and powerful city,—the antagonist of Rome, the birth-place of Theocritus and Archimedes, and proverbial for its riches; now dwindled to a twentieth part of its former extent, and prostrate beneath a tyranny more galling than, in the days of its glory, it dealt forth to other states. One hour more brought us to the modern town, where we arrived in the evening, after a ride of twenty-six miles.

CHAPTER X.

SYRACUSE.

THERE are but few cities of equal celebrity with Syracuse, of which so little now remains to attest their former glory; and while riding over the ground on which it is notorious that the richest quarters of the city stood, the traveller is puzzled to know what can have become of the remains of the massive edifices that formerly occupied the space around him, as nothing is now visible but the surface of barren rock. The shape of the ground points out very clearly the line and extent of the ancient walls, and from their wide circuit, the beauty of the situation, and the convenience of the noble harbour, it is not difficult to realize what we are told by various historians, that it was one of the greatest, most magnificent, and most powerful amongst the Grecian cities.

The name of the town was derived from the Marsh Syraco, which lies to the westward of the Great Harbour. To the north-east of that fine sheet of water lies The Island, or Ortygia, where Archias of Corinth,* the founder of the city, first established himself, about 700 years before Christ. Ortygia

* Thucyd. vi. 3.

lies between the Great and Little Harbours, and consequently forms a most important military position. To the north of the Little Harbour, and occupying the sea-front from it to the port of Trogilus, lay the large district called Acradina, and to the west of it, Tyche, so called from the temple of Fortune, which embellished that part of the city. These two divisions formed an irregular triangular space, having its apex near the rocky district called Epipolæ, which commanded the rest of the city.

Of these divisions, formerly crowded by a rich and luxurious population, the first alone, scarcely two miles in circumference, is occupied by the modern town, which contains about 14,000 inhabitants, a pitiful remnant of a city once twenty-two miles in circuit, and whose citizens were counted by hundreds of thousands. At the south of the Great Harbour, and forming one side of its entrance, is the rocky position of Plemmyrium, overhanging the gulf of Dascon; and from thence to the river Anapus extended the Olympieum, or ground attached to the Temple of Jupiter.

For many years subsequent to the days of Archias, Ortygia contained the whole of the population; but as the numbers increased, the narrow arm of the sea which divided the island from the main land was filled up, and the city expanded to the extent above stated. The isthmus thus formed was afterwards cut through by the Emperor Charles V., and strong works were erected for the defence of the island, which are now in bad repair, and generally unfurnished with artillery. Syracuse fell into the hands of the Romans B. C. 210, and, deprived of its

individual importance by the all-absorbing power of that mighty empire, it vegetated in peace and comparative insignificance, and successively became a prey to the Vandals, the Eastern Emperors, and the Saracens; falling eventually into the hands of the Norman Count Roger. The present appearance of the town is quite in accordance with its fallen fortunes. The streets are narrow and dirty, and quite devoid of architectural pretensions. With the exception of the cathedral, there is no public building of any interest, and, independent of the beauties of its natural position, old associations are the only attractions it can possess for the traveller.

September 26.—Our first visit was to the far-famed fountain of Arethusa, which issues still in a copious stream from an arch in the rock at the western side of Ortygia. It is protected from the encroachments of the sea by part of the town-wall, but how changed and fallen from its high estate, those only who saw it in its glory could fully understand.* The sweet waters have become brackish; Diana's grove has given place to mean hovels; the sacred fish have disappeared; and a tribe of bare-legged girls, unworthy representatives of the nymphs whose airy forms were once reflected in the crystal flood, have converted it into the public washing-house of the city.

The story of Arethusa may serve as a specimen of an ancient novel, *not* in three volumes octavo. She was a nymph of Elis, in Peloponnesus, with whom the god of the river

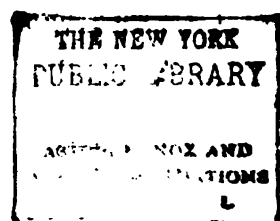
* Cicero in Verr. iv. 53.



E. W. Cooke del.

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Alpheus, in the same country, became enamoured, as he watched her one day bathing after her return from hunting. Less discreet than the lover of Musidora, when placed in similar circumstances, the river god pursued the object of his passion, who fled from him, until, exhausted and ready to sink with fatigue, she implored the succour of Diana. The heedful goddess answered her entreaties by changing her into a fountain; Alpheus then mingled his stream with her's, both sunk into the earth, and, passing under the sea, rose again in Ortygia,* where, as it was believed, any leaves or flowers thrown as votive offerings into the Arcadian spring eventually appeared.

Lord Nelson, in more recent times, added to the ancient renown of the spring, by choosing it as the watering-place of the fleet under his command, when engaged in the arduous chase of the French which ended in the glorious battle of the Nile. In a letter written from Syracuse to Lady Hamilton, he says: "We have victualled and watered; and surely, watering at the Fountain of Arethusa, we must have victory."†

Outside the walls, and about thirty yards from the fountain of Arethusa, is another curious spring of fresh water, which bubbles up through the sand at the bottom of the Great Harbour. The salt water is not deep over it, and the upward stream is very distinctly visible. This is called L'Occhio di Zilica.

* Pomp. Mela. ii. 17. Virg. *Æn.* iii. 684. Sil. Ital. xiv. 53. Ov. Met. v. 572.

† Nelson's Despatches and Letters, vol. iii. p. 47.

A strong fort, Il Castello di Maniace, commands the entrance into the Great Harbour. The Saracens had bestowed much care and attention on the strengthening of this part of the island, but their works, having gone to decay, were subsequently put into order by Giorgio Maniace, a Byzantine general. These again were so much injured by an accidental explosion of gunpowder during the last century, that it was found necessary to take down the greater portion of the building. Over the gateway formerly stood two brazen rams, whose construction was attributed to Archimedes, for the purpose of indicating the direction of the wind. These singular relics were given at a later period, by Alfonso I., to Giovanni Ventimiglia, upon whose tomb they were placed.

The castle is situated quite at the southern extremity of the island, and seems to have attracted towards it the refuse of the Syracusan population. The women were sitting in groups as we passed by, carding cotton, or spinning with the primitive spindle and distaff; and few were the houses which we passed, from which the watchful mother did not invite our attention to the *bella ragazza* seated beside her. Continuing our tour of the walls, we came back at last to the gate by which we had at first entered. This point had evidently been fortified with much care, though everything now bears a look of dilapidation; between the gate and the mainland are no less than five distinct trenches and lines of defence. In some of the embrasures a few long brass guns were lying, but apparently, to non-military eyes, in a very unserviceable state.

September 27.—Passing through the Strada Maestranza, the principal thoroughfare of the town, we made for the

Franciscan convent of Sta. Lucia. We were received very hospitably by the inmates, who showed us every civility during the time we remained on their premises. They took us first of all to their church, in the aisle of which lay the corpse of an old woman on a bier, waiting for interment. Whether the rites of the Church had been performed over her or not did not appear, but no one seemed to be paying the smallest attention to her. In one of the chapels is the picture which was the chief attraction. It is by Correggio, representing the Patroness of the church, Virgin and Martyr; and in a detached octagonal building are her remains, with a superincumbent marble statue. The surrounding earth is said to cure complaints in the eyes. From the church the good monk led us off to see the interior of the convent, and the quarters of his brethren. The cells, though small, were not uncomfortable, though they looked, as did indeed all the rest of the place, somewhat slovenly and dirty. Most of them had their small libraries, confined apparently to theological works; and the ornaments consisted chiefly of gaudy representations of favourite saints. A small contribution to the box at the church door, whose contents are devoted to charitable purposes, was the only return we were allowed to make for the trouble we had given. At no great distance stands another convent of Capuchin monks, which is chiefly remarkable for the beauty of its gardens, formed in the bottom of an ancient quarry of considerable extent. The gardens are prettily laid out, and as vegetation is luxuriant, a very little trouble expended in making them tidy would be amply repaid. As it is, they are not better tended than the church and convent to which

they are attached. In these excavations some of the numerous Athenians who were captured at the battle of the Asinarus are said to have been confined.

Under the old church of S. Giovanni, near the same locality, is the entrance to the catacombs, which are ancient and very extensive. From a main street, as I may call it, of considerable height, branch off others to the right and left, with chambers on each side for the reception of the bodies. Some of these vaults are large, holding above twenty corpses side by side. Here and there passages lead to large circular chambers with similar accommodation both for adults and children, which being extremely dry, come up as nearly as possible to the idea of Sir Lucius O'Trigger, when he talked of "snug lying," and at all events offer a pleasing contrast to the wretched system of intramural sepulture still persevered in in London and other large towns, in which the practice is most likely to be prejudicial. The monks show a pillar, to which they say that martyrs were bound for execution, and also a small subterranean church of very ancient date.

In the quarter of the town situated between Tyche and the north of the Great Harbour, and formerly called Neapolis, are the great excavations known as the *Latomie* or quarries, out of one of which runs the curious cavern so familiarly known as the Ear of Dionysius. This large excavation got its name from an idea that it was the representation, on an extended scale, of the human ear; and Kircher, who saw it during his travels in 1638, leans to this view; but it is more probable that the resemblance is merely accidental. Its dimensions, as far as we could ascertain them, the space being of very

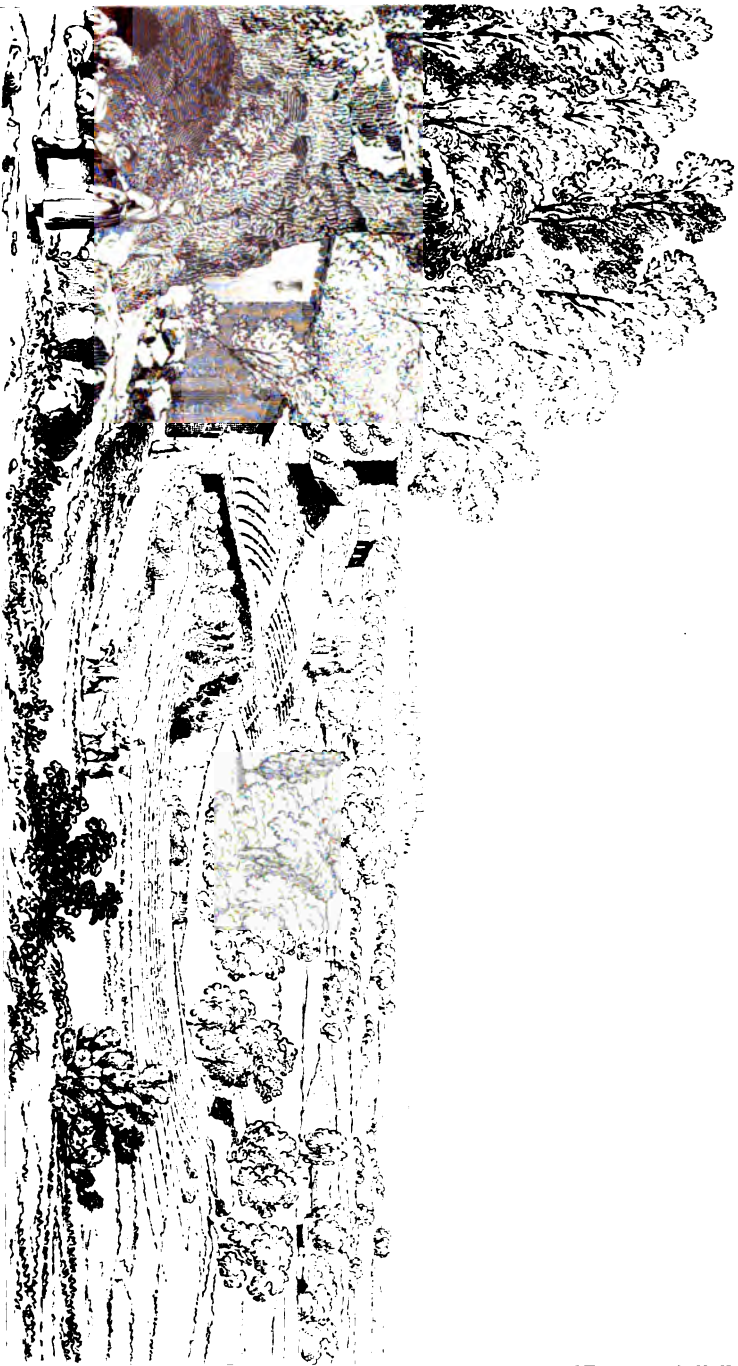
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A VIEW OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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irregular form, are fifty-eight feet high, from seventeen to twenty-five feet broad, and about two hundred feet long. It is of a curved shape. This large chamber communicates at the top with a smaller one, to which there is no access, unless by being hauled up or lowered down the face of the precipitous side. There, however, the tyrant is said to have sat, and listened to the discourse of his captives. There is a curious echo in the cavern, but it would be difficult to make out a conversation: at any rate, Dionysius did not trust only to this method of becoming acquainted with what was going on about him, as we find from Plutarch that he had in his pay numerous emissaries, *προσάγωγας*, who mixed with the people as upon friendly terms, and then betrayed to their employer the secrets they might have wormed out. Branching off to the right from the entrance to the Ear of Dionysius, is another large space, which is now used as a rope-walk.

Leaving the *Latomie*, we walked across the country to the remains of the theatre, which are very extensive, and command a very beautiful and extensive view to the south-east, over the island, the Great Harbour, and Plemmyrium. The design of the whole is very easily to be traced, as the lower seats, which were cut from the live rock, are in a very perfect state, and all seems well arranged for the thousands it is estimated to have held. Its general arrangements are sufficiently indicated by the account previously given of that at Taormina. In the upper corridor some names appear carved in Greek characters. Two are very visible,—*ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΑΣ ΝΗΡΗΙΔΟΣ*, and *ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΑΣ ΦΙΛΙΣΤΙΔΟΣ*,—leading fashionables, no doubt, of the day, when private boxes were, as now, the exception

and not the rule. A stream runs through the middle of the theatre, and served to keep up a supply of water, if wanted for nautical representations. It is now turned to more useful purposes, as it turns a mill which has been erected on this classic ground. Diodorus praises this theatre as one of the best works of its kind. Between it and the town formerly stood an amphitheatre, but though the size and shape of it are easily to be made out, yet they would hardly warrant any attempt at a lengthened description. The road by which we had to return proved considerably longer than we anticipated, owing to the numerous détours caused by the different portions of the fortifications.

September 28.—We devoted an hour to visiting the museum, which is by no means extensive, and does not compensate by its internal arrangements for its want of attraction in other respects. There are, however, plenty of vases, and a great many lamps, with some pieces of sculpture, of which a torso of Venus is the most remarkable. In the neighbourhood is the church of San Filippo, the principal curiosity of which is a deep well, with a spiral staircase ingeniously cut out of the rock, round the shaft. Having seen thus much on the island, we hailed a boat, and crossed the Porto Marmoreo, keeping close along the shore, where the action of the water has worn the rock into a variety of fantastic caves.

At a locality now called Buon Servizio, tradition points out the site of the residence of the celebrated Archimedes. As no other mention will be made of this ingenious mechanist and geometrician, some few lines must be here devoted to a short account of him and his illustrious conqueror. The Roman

general, Marcellus had been sent into Sicily to oppose the Carthaginians, he having previously gained advantages over Hannibal. Having attacked Syracuse by sea and land, he experienced effectual resistance chiefly through machines constructed by Archimedes, and unable to overcome science by mere force, he changed the siege into a blockade, which was long persevered in. Accident at last discovered to him a weak point in the works, where he effected a lodgment, and having got possession of Tyche, eventually became master of the rest of the city. Livy tells us* that when the general reflected on the misery the assault was likely to produce he could not refrain from tears. Be that as it may, he was most active in the cause of humanity, and the most illustrious victim, Archimedes, fell a sacrifice to the ignorance as much as to the ferocity of the soldier who broke into his room, strict orders having been issued by Marcellus, that he above all should be saved from injury. His death occurred about 212 B. C.

To the south of Buon Servizio stands a ruinous building called the Palazzo delle Sessante Lette. It is said to have been erected by Agathocles, Tyrant of Syracuse, who lived about 250 B. C. The portions of the roof which remain are curiously formed, being supported on an arch made of earthenware bottles or tubes, fitting into each other like our gas pipes, and filled with mortar. The father of Agathocles was a potter, which may account for this peculiar construction.

We then proceeded to the Cathedral. This building which is the only one of any magnitude in the modern town, occu-

* Lib. xxv. cap. 25.

pies the site, and is in a great measure formed of the materials of the Temple of Minerva, which was one of the most ancient of those sacred edifices. The principal remains now existing may be classed, says Mr. Wilkinson in his "Vitruvius," in the following chronological order: Syracuse, Selinus, Egesta, and Agrigentum. That of which we are now writing has eleven columns of the peristyle visible on one side, and eight on the other; but the intercolumniations having been everywhere built up, and the cella pierced with arches, it is not easy to recall the general appearance. The length of the temple appears to have been about 185 feet, and the breadth 75 feet. Internally, Minerva has completely merged into *Our Lady of the Pillar*. The modern façade of the church is of the Corinthian order, and overloaded with ornament. Cicero, in his oration against Verres, has given a glowing description of the ancient splendour of this place of worship. The precious metals, he tells us, were everywhere lavishly used for the purpose of ornamenting it, and the sister arts of painting and sculpture lent their aid, recording the exploits of Agathocles, and displaying the features of the former rulers of Sicily. Conspicuously elevated on the summit of the edifice was a statue of the goddess, bearing on her extended arm a glittering shield. The Syracusan mariners, as this beacon faded from their view, threw offerings into the sea to propitiate the deity, and thus secure for themselves a prosperous voyage and safe return.

Michaelmas Day.—The siege of Syracuse by the Athenians being one of the most considerable mentioned in ancient history, and its results having been most fatal to the power of

the republic which undertook it, a short outline of the proceedings on that occasion does not seem to be an unfit preface to the account of the ground which was the scene of action. The Athenians were led into the quarrel originally (B. C. 412) by the artifices of the inhabitants of Egesta. Much difference of opinion prevailed amongst the popular leaders at Athens, with respect to the prudence of the step they were about to adopt. Nicias, who with Lamachus was eventually appointed to the command, was from the first averse to the expedition; and after it had been decided upon, the opinion of Lamachus, who wished at once to attack Syracuse, was not followed out. When the Athenian force at last arrived in the harbour, they encamped in the Olympieum, the temple being held by the Syracusans, and in all the proceedings during the first year the invaders were successful.

Alcibiades, who had at Athens urged the undertaking of the siege, had in the mean time been tried for his life, and escaped to Sparta, where he backed up the solicitations of the Syracusan ambassadors for assistance, and Gylippus was appointed general by the Lacedæmonians, and ordered to go into Sicily. The Athenians, after a battle in which Lamachus was killed, occupied the high ground of Epipolæ, and pressed the siege with such vigour, that surrender was talked of by the inhabitants of the city. The arrival of a messenger from Gylippus, followed speedily by that of the general himself, gave a new aspect to affairs. He sent at once to Nicias, giving him five days during which he might withdraw; but the Athenian leader, confident of success, prepared for battle, in which he was worsted. Nicias then fortified Plemmyrium, which com-

manded the southern side of the entrance to the Great Harbour, but the forts were taken by the Syracusans after a severe action. They likewise gained a naval victory, which in a special manner discouraged the invaders.

Demosthenes, who had been sent from Athens with succour, at last arrived, but did not retrieve the fallen fortunes of Nicias, and after various vain manœuvres, a retreat from Syracuse was determined upon by the two generals. Unfortunately an eclipse of the moon took place, and the orders for sailing were from superstitious reasons countermanded. This delay allowed the news of their approaching departure to get wind, and gave the inhabitants time to organize an attack on them both by sea and land. The combat, which was most obstinately fought out, ended in favour of the Sicilians, and the mutiny of their seamen put the finishing stroke to the misfortunes of the invaders. Compelled to abandon their position, and retire, they were hotly pursued by Gylippus. Demosthenes and a large body of troops were overtaken and compelled to surrender, and the bloody battle of the Asinarus threw Nicias and the survivors of his army into the hands of the enemy. The Athenian generals were put to death, against the strongly expressed wishes of the Lacedæmonian leader; and multitudes of the prisoners, shut up in the *Latomia*, perished miserably.*

“*Hic primum,*” says Cicero, alluding to Syracuse, “*opes illius civitatis victæ, comminutæ, depressæque sunt : in hoc portu Atheniensium nobilitatis, imperii, gloriæ, naufragium factum existimatur.*”†

* Thucyd. vii. 87.

† In Verr.

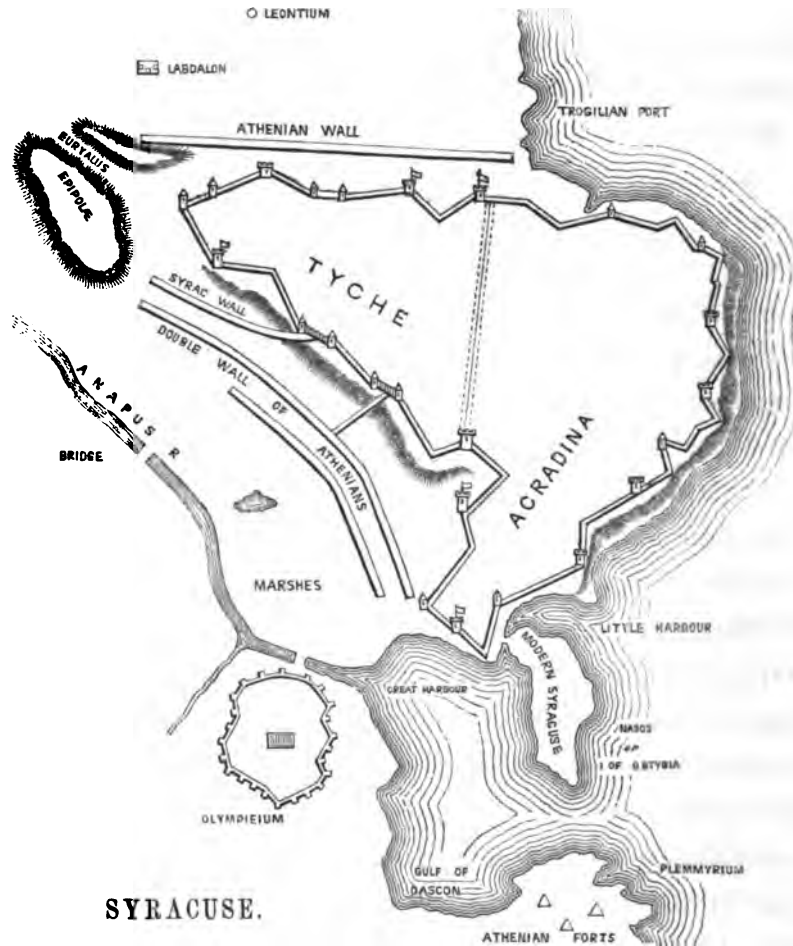
Plutarch, in his life of Nicias, mentions the fact that many of the unhappy prisoners regained their liberty by repeating to their captors verses from the tragedies of Euripides, of which the Sicilians were passionately fond. One of our own poets has taken advantage of this relation, and introduced the following allusion to it into one of his best works:—

“When Athens’ armies fell at Syracuse,
And fettered thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar.
See, as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o’ermastered victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands, his idle scimitar
Starts from his belt, he rends the captive’s chains,
And bids him thank the Bard for freedom and his strains.”

BYRON—CHILDE HAROLD.

The rocky ground of Plemmyrium, where the sites of the Athenian forts are still to be traced, abounds in tombs of various sizes cut out of the solid rock. Seated in one of these, into which we had retreated to avoid the sun, and overlooking the whole scene of the engagements on both elements, we spent some pleasant hours, reading the account of the expedition in the quaint language of old Hobbes, and, despite their being undoubtedly the aggressors, sympathizing with the unfortunate Athenians. At the base of the hill two pillars still remain to mark the site of the temple of Olympian Jove, the strong post of the Syracusans to the south of the Anapus, and which gave the name to the surrounding district. Beyond it flowed that river, which witnessed the

discomfiture of Demosthenes, while the hill of Epipolæ and the modern town completed the view.



We did not set our faces homeward until the lengthening shadows announced the approaching sunset, and our boatmen became clamorous to return. On our arrival we were surprised and pleased to find that our servant had remembered the English custom of the day, which had not

occurred to us, for on the table appeared in due course a very homely looking roast goose, which speedily occupied in our thoughts the place so recently filled with the memory of more illustrious victims. The dark red and rich wine of Syracuse formed no disagreeable accompaniment to the savoury bird. It was by far the best that we had fallen in with since landing.

September 30.—Mounting our mules in good time, we left Ortygia, and took the direction of Epipolæ and Euryalus, the heights of which extend westward of Tyche and Neapolis. After passing the theatre, the road runs along a street cut out of the rock, and called *La Strada dei Sepolcri*. It is of considerable length, and on both sides are numerous tombs cut out of the rock, each consisting of an antechamber and interior room, which latter were about five feet in height, and double that in diameter: each having five or six graves in it. Beyond this remarkable street are the remains of an aqueduct erected by Gelon, who obtained possession of Syracuse about 490 B. C., and whose reign was marked by mild and judicious conduct. Part of the aqueduct is still used. We reached Labdalon in about an hour and a half. Upon this site the Athenians had a fort in the earlier part of the siege, and the position is marked by the remains of walls, and masses of cut stone. It, as well as Euryalus, was at a later period included within the extended walls of the city. It was in this direction that Marcellus made good his entrance, having selected for the attempt a time when the inhabitants were engaged in the celebration of the great festival of Diana.

Near Euryalus was the celebrated wall built by Dionysius in a very short space of time. He employed on the work

60,000 men and 6000 yoke of oxen. Some remains of it are yet pointed out, which attest the massive style of its construction. These high grounds are now generally known as the Bel Vedere, and the name is here worthily bestowed, putting to shame our suburban Belmonts and Belle Vues. Tradition points out the locality as having contained the house of Timoleon; one, who in his day was reckoned as among the greatest benefactors to the city. A Corinthian by birth, he was despatched by that state to assist the Syracusans against the Carthaginians. Having succeeded to the fullest extent in carrying out that object, and defeated the invaders in more than one instance, he continued to reside in Sicily, amongst a people whose best affections he had gained by his conduct, and whose respect he enjoyed to the close of his life.*

Descending to the Lysimelian marshes, we sent our mules back to Syracuse, and walked for some miles to the fountain of Cyane, having ordered a boat to meet us at that spring. Cyane was a Sicilian nymph who attempted to assist Proserpine when in the clutches of her ravisher, and who was changed by Pluto into a fountain to damp her zeal for her friend. The spring, now commonly called La Pisma, is a very fine body of the purest water, about four fathoms deep, and abounding in fish. On its banks grows the real papyrus, brought here originally from Egypt. At the house of Signor Politi, a virtuoso of Syracuse, and dealer in *antichità*, we saw some paper manufactured from it, as he said, according to the ancient mode. The operation was, to split the

* Plut. Tim.

pith into thin slices, and gum the edges neatly together, putting the sheet so formed under heavy pressure.

The fountain gives rise to a clear stream which runs into the Anapus. After reaching the latter river we had some difficulty in forcing our boat through the reeds by which the channel was blocked up, but we got into the clear stream at last, and thence pulled down to the harbour. The Syracusan aristocracy displayed themselves during the evening on the Marino in great numbers. Many of the ladies were dressed in the *manto*, a garment similar to the mantilla of Seville, or faldetta of Malta. It has a hood, is made very full, and gathered in tight at the waist, and has a very pretty and becoming effect.

CHAPTER XI.

DEPARTURE FROM SYRACUSE.—FEMALE PEASANTS.—MIRANDA.—LA PIZ-
ZUTA.—NOTO.—PACHYNUS.—SPACCAFURNO.—ISPICA.—MODICA.—
CAMARINA.—TERRA NOVA.—PALMA.—ARRIVAL AT GIRGENTI.

OCTOBER 1.—Time did not allow us to prolong our stay at Syracuse, and this morning the operations of packing commenced at an early hour. We experienced some delay from the difficulty we had in finding some one who would cash our circular notes; but that was got over, and we cleared out of the place in the afternoon. Crossing the Anapus we rode along the Helorine way, and soon after passing the Temple of Jupiter, turned to take the last look at our late abode. We pushed on, through an uninteresting tract of country, presenting no object of remark, to a place called Lungarino, where we pitched our tent, in the arrangements of which we had made some improvements during our stay in the town, of which we found the advantage in the saving of time in setting it up, and the increased comfort of the interior.

October 2.—The road went over a plain covered with the palmetta: along it we were jogging soon after daylight, avoiding the heat as much we could. We met numerous peasants of both sexes making their way into town. The females had their hair picturesquely dressed in the mode denomi-

nated, I believe, *à la Grecque*, under brown skull-caps, which fashion we had not before met with. About ten o'clock we got to the Miranda, the ancient Erineus, on whose banks the army of Demosthenes was overtaken by and compelled to surrender to Gylippús.

Still following the track of the retreating army, we reached in the afternoon a spot called La Pizzuta, on the banks of the Asinarus. A pillar still remains, supposed to stand on the spot where the Lacedæmonian general received the surrender of Nicias. It is now about thirty-three feet high, but has evidently been higher. It had recently been put into some degree of repair by his majesty the King of the Two Sicilies, who has recorded his own good deed on a large slab of white marble, but left tradition to tell the cause of its original erection. A few miles beyond it we got on to the sea shore, and having found water and dry ground, halted for the night. On the heights to our left stood Noto, a town of no particular attractions, but which gives its name to one of the great districts into which the island is divided, the Val di Noto. Mazzara does the same for the westerly portion; and the third, comprising the north-eastern district and Ætna, is called the Val di Demone, from the reputed residence of his satanic majesty in the volcano.

While the usual preparations for the night were making, I strolled along the beach to a spot where I saw a number of the coast guard assembled. I found that they were in charge of the crew of a Greek brigantine which had been lost on the rocks close by the place a few days before. She had two passengers on board at the time, one a Frenchman and the other

an English artist, Mr. Thornely. Never were two poor fellows in a more deplorable plight. Everything they had was under water,—clothes, money, sketches, all gone ; in addition to which, they were kept in strict quarantine, awaiting a reply from the proper authorities to a report of their case.

October 3.—We contrived to make out some little help for them out of our scanty baggage, and handed it over through the *guardiano* before starting. Leaving the small town of Pachino on our right, we rode to Terra Nobile, where we fell in with a good-natured priest, who saw us on the look-out for an inn, and invited us to his house. He volunteered to accompany us to the small island of Passaro, which was formerly called Pachynus, and forms the south-eastern extremity of Sicily. A small fort now stands upon it, but even our clerical companion could not prevail on the commandant to admit strangers into his insignificant command. I took advantage of the boat to get a swim in the deep blue warm water, which was most delightful after so many hours in the sun, and then adjourned to the house of our host, where we found all very comfortable.

Taking leave of him in the evening, we took a line across the country to Spaccafurno. Track there was none, but we had a very open desolate country to go over, and found a pocket compass of use in keeping us to our course. We got accidentally a good deal in advance of the muleteers, and at sunset found ourselves, minus our baggage, in the middle of the plain. We made various attempts, by shouting and riding here and there, to bring the party together, but all failed, and after a tumble over my mule's head, she going into a

hole in the dark, we pushed on as straight as we could, and in about an hour came to an uninhabited house, where we found a stable open into which we put our beasts. The house door yielded to a little *douce violence*, and we found shelter and plenty of straw. Of the latter the mules got what they chose to eat; as we were unluckily precluded from that indulgence, we made the best bed we could of it, and slept well, though the mice were more numerous than was agreeable.

October 4.—There was no sort of delay, when daylight did appear, in getting away, and having stuck a pecuniary honorarium in the key-hole, we trotted on to Spaccafurno, which proved to be about five miles distant. At a fountain outside the walls we found our missing guides and mules. The town, which looked pretty well at a distance, proved no exception to the general rule, but turned out a dirty small place, possessing, however, some little trade. We remained there long enough to breakfast and complete our marketing, and proceeded to Ispica, a distance of about ten miles, where we arrived early in the afternoon, the road having been throughout stony and disagreeable. The valley of Ispica runs for about three miles through steep rocks of sandstone. In the midst runs a pretty rivulet, and in every direction excavations of various forms and sizes meet the eye. Our first business was to fix upon one of these ancient abodes as our temporary abode, and having done that and dined, we sallied out to inspect the place more closely. It is said to have been the habitation of the Troglodytes, who were the earliest inhabitants of Sicily; and, if so, they displayed conside-

rable industry in reaching and burrowing into the rocks which bounded their happy valley. The east side was apparently the favourite. Some of the more extensive excavations are known by distinctive appellations. La Larderia, which was near our abode, has three corridors, with chambers on both sides. At the other end of the valley, a large isolated rock, called Il Castello, has a regular suite of rooms on two stories, with a staircase formed in the face of the rock. In some parts the openings are in three and four stories, though, from the face of the rock having given way, the mode of access has disappeared. The appearance of the place recalled to mind the prophecies against the Edomites of old, "dwelling in the clefts of the rocks, and holding the heights of the hills." The rooms which are nearest the base of the rock, and easiest reached from the road which runs through the valley, are every here and there made use of as dwellings or stables by the few people who inhabit the place. Our domicile was the property of an old lady, who dwelt in a cave near us, and supported herself by the produce of some walnut trees. She found in us extensive and probably unexpected purchasers.

October 5.—After bathing in the river, we walked to La Spezieria, which is cut out, at some height above the ground, from a large white rock. It has two chambers with pillars left in them, and branching from them are recesses with seats. Above them is another excavation, apparently a tomb, containing twenty graves, arranged round in tiers, like the berths in a ship.

We did not think it worth while to visit any more of these

places, which resemble one another very much, and we were also obliged to give up the search for some ancient inscriptions of which we had heard, but of which we could find no trace. Before noon we were off on our way to Modica, a town prettily situated in the midst of rocky hills. The district about it is considered to be one of the best cultivated in the island, and is celebrated for its cattle, wool, and manufacture of cheese and butter. The town contains about 24,000 inhabitants. Judging by the sensation our arrival evidently produced, I should say, that the specimens of the T. G. seen here are very rare. Six miles beyond it we came to Scicli, a little town with a disproportionate number of churches, of which we counted thirteen. We halted for the night near Donna Lucata, which stands close to the sea on an open sandy beach.

October 6.—The ride to Santa Croce was altogether along the shore, and that town did not detain us for a longer time than was necessary to buy our provisions. A short distance beyond it we found a pleasant spot, under some fine carob trees, which combined the advantages of shade, water, and firewood. The carubba or carob-tree grows to a considerable size, and has a very fine foliage of dark, roundish, shining leaves. The fruit grows in the form of large bean-pods, and the inside is sweet and agreeable to the taste. The mules eat it eagerly, and a large quantity is annually exported for the purpose of feeding horses. Before halting we passed over or near the site of Camarina, a town originally dependent on Syracuse, and built about 135 years after the mother city, and more than once destroyed and repeopled. Near it,

on the side of a small bay, in a very exposed situation, is the small trading village of Scoglietti.

October 7.—Crossing the Dirillo, formerly the Arbates, at its mouth, it being in summer but an insignificant stream, we had a tiresome ride through heavy sand to Terra Nova, the ancient Gela, which was founded 713 years B. C., and destroyed about 400 years later by Phintias of Agrigentum. It was the birth-place of Gelon, who became afterwards ruler of Syracuse, and died universally beloved and regretted.

Terra Nova is a busy place, with a population of from 6000 to 8000 inhabitants, and boasts, I was told, possession of the handsomest women in Sicily, a fact which the shortness of my stay unfortunately prevented me from verifying. Here we saw for the first time plantations of the cotton plant, which was quite a novelty to us. The bad conduct of a refractory mule in the course of the day caused us a heavy loss, sundry bottles of wine and liqueurs, which we could not replace, having been through his means demolished. We stopped for the night on the banks of the Manfria.

October 8.—Leaving Butera to the right, we got in good time to Alicata. Near this stood Himera, a town which attained eminence in its day at the expense of its neighbour, Gela. The modern place is of respectable size, though it looks neglected and rather out at elbows. We put up at the Albergo di Londra. Four hours' riding in the evening brought us to Palma, a neat little town; and finding there that we could not reach Girgenti in good time, while the country was pretty, with water and trees, we stopped a mile or two beyond it.

October 9.—Quitting the monotonous track along the shore, we rode over the sides of the hills to the Fiume di Girgenti, the old Acragas, which we crossed, and at noon were close to the Temple of Juno, which stands at the eastern extremity of the line of ruins. We proceeded at once to the spacious area of the Temple of Olympian Jove at the other end of them, and pitched our tent in the centre of it, with more than usual care, intending to make it our head-quarters for some days. We rejoiced the while, at being thus enabled, after a successful and healthy journey, to carry out a plan which we had often talked over before leaving London.

Don Giuseppe Benelli, our active and excellent courier, cook, and factotum, was soon off to the town on the heights above us, and returned laden with provisions of all sorts, of which he made the most in an extempore kitchen which he established under a fig-tree in one corner of the temple.

Nothing could be prettier or more interesting in every way than our position. Close alongside of our tent lay on its back a gigantic figure of rough stone and coarse workmanship, which formerly served as a support for some portion of the sacred fabric. The massive stones of which the walls were composed surrounded us in confused heaps on every side, while scattered about here and there lay capitals and other portions of pillars, clearly showing the grand scale on which the edifice had been planned. Immediately in our front, and at a short distance, appearing over a thicket of evergreen trees and shrubs, stood the solitary pillar marking the site of the Temple of Hercules. Above and beyond it rose in all its beauty the western end of the Temple of Concord, not a stone

wanting in its six columns and well-proportioned pediment; while the more dilapidated fane of Juno Lucina closed the view. Two miles to the north, on high ground and in a commanding position, stood the modern town of Girgenti; and to the south, the blue waters of the Mediterranean stretched away into the distance.



Plate III. 4. 181.

THE MOUNTAINS OF THE ALPES, 1811.

Published by the Author, London, 1811.

W. J. 1811.

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CHAPTER XII.

AGRIGENTUM.

AGRIGENTUM, or Acragas, was formerly one of the most opulent and splendid cities in the island. Though now fallen from its high estate, the architectural remains sufficiently attest the taste of the designers, as well as the importance and magnificence of the buildings. The town was founded originally by a colony from Rhodes, and rose to eminence through its commercial enterprise, carrying on an extensive traffic with the city of Carthage, and owing its final overthrow, as well as its previous prosperity, to that great emporium.

It probably was at the height of its glory and greatness in the days of Theron, about 480 B. C., after its contest with the city of Ægesta, out of which, with the assistance of Gelon of Syracuse, it came victorious. So great was the number of prisoners then taken, that as many as 500 fell to the lot of individuals, and to their compulsory labours are owing many of the massive works which still exist. The excessive luxury of the inhabitants, as well as the substantial style of their houses and public works, is alluded to by the historian,* who says "that they gave themselves up to sensual enjoyment,

* Diog. Laert. Emped.

as if about to die the next day, but built as if they were to live for ever."

Exænetus, when victor at the Olympic games, returned to this his native city with 300 chariots, each drawn by two white horses. Another citizen, Antisthenes, collected no less than 800 chariots full of guests on the occasion of his daughter's wedding. Gellias, another Agrigentine, carried his magnificence to a height scarcely credible. He, we are told, kept a house open to all comers, and on one occasion entertained 500 knights, whom he not only boarded and lodged, but also provided with dresses.* His cellars were calculated to hold 300 large vessels, each containing 100 amphoræ. The same magnificence was extended to their sepulchres, stately monuments being by them erected even for horses;† while some idea of the extent to which they carried their ordinary attention to personal comfort may be formed from the *restrictions* placed on those engaged in the watch during the time of siege, who were *only* allowed the luxuries of a stuffed mattress, blanket, bolster, and pillow.‡

But this city boasted more distinguished men than those mentioned. Here was born Empedocles, the historian, orator, and poet, to whom perhaps the first place may be assigned. The manner of his death is familiar to every classical student.

"Deus immortalis haberi

Dum cupit, Empedocles ardentem frigidus Ætnam
Insiluit."

HOR. ARS POET.

* Diod. Sic. xiii. Timæus xv.

† Plin. N. H. 8.

‡ Diod. Sic. xiii.

Diodorus has given long accounts of the judicious policy and mild government of Theron. For widely different reasons, the names of the tyrant Phalaris and his victim Perillus, the constructor of the

“Bue Cician che mughio prima,
Col pianto di colui
Che l'avea temperato con sua lima,”

are commonly known.* Here too arose that sect of physicians, known from their peculiar mode of practice as Empirics, their founder being Acron, whose name is thus punned upon by his countryman Empedocles in an epitaph.

Ἄκρον ἱατρον Ἀκρων Ἀκραγαντινῶν πατὺρ ἀκρου
Κρυπτὴ κρημνὸς ἀκρος πατρίδος ἀκροατῆς.

October 10.—As this was one of the places to which we had given notice to our correspondents to direct, we were occupied for some time in the morning with letters, and the necessary replies. That done we proceeded to the examination of the Temple of Jupiter, in which we were located. This edifice, which claimed a place among the four largest in the world, was in part the result of the labours of the Carthaginian prisoners taken at Himera. The three others which competed with it in size and splendour were those of Diana at Ephesus, Jupiter at Athens, and Venus at Carthage. Every ornament that sculpture and painting could devise were

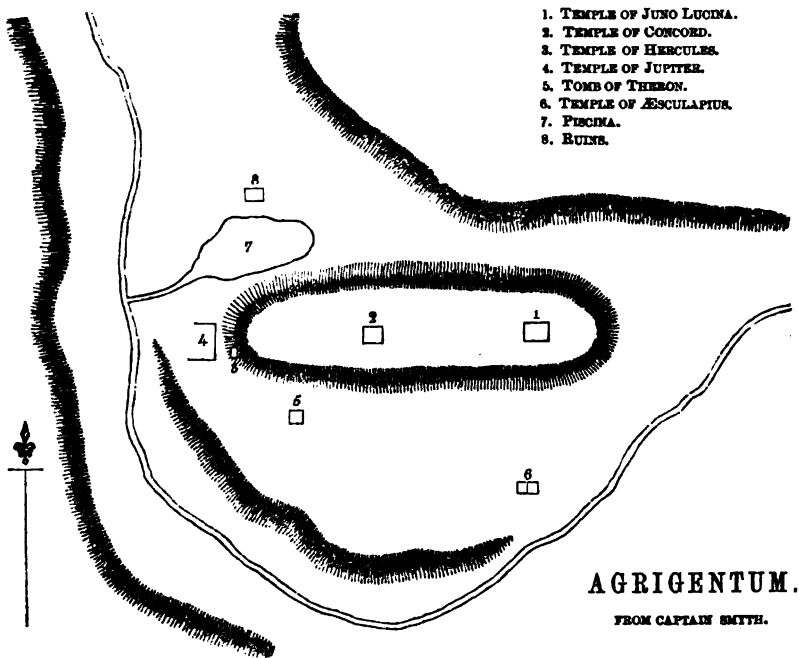
* The bull was afterwards captured and sent to Africa by the Carthaginians, and restored to Agrigentum after the destruction of their city by Scipio. Diodorus says it existed in his day.

lavishly bestowed on it. On the pediment to the east was represented the conflict of the Giants; on that to the west, the destruction of Troy; and the interior contained the celebrated picture of Alcmena, by Zeuxis, presented to the city by that great painter, as he *modestly* deemed it to be beyond all price. The task of ascertaining with accuracy the dimensions of the temple was not an easy one, as the confused manner in which the unwieldy masses of stone lay made it difficult to get a straight line.* It had fourteen columns on each side, and seven at either end. At the east end one or two of the stones forming the base of a pillar are still in their place, the flutings being large enough to allow a person to sit in them. The Atlas, as the antiquaries term it, near our tent, was twenty-four feet in length; and the forehead of the figure, as it lay on its back, nearly breast high. The news of our arrival having spread, some of the clergy walked down from the town to take a look at us; we found them very conversible and agreeable.

October 11.—The modern town is beautifully situated on a range of hills facing the south, and distant about four miles from the sea. It completely overlooks the site of the ancient

| | Feet. | Inches. |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------|
| * Length, | 355 | 0 |
| Breadth, | 172 | 6 |
| Semicircle of column, | 22 | 5 |
| Diameter of capital, | 15 | 2 |
| Height of capital, | 3 | 10 |
| Length of triglyph, | 10 | 5 |
| Breadth of triglyph, | 5 | 10½ |
| Depth of furrows, | 0 | 7 |
| Width of flutings, | 1 | 10 |

city, and unworthily represents in size and population the former abode of 800,000 inhabitants. We devoted this day to a walk through it, and to an inspection of the collection of



antiquities belonging to Signor Politi, some connexion of his Syracusan namesake. He had a considerable assortment of curious things, principally vases, of which we purchased a few specimens. Descending the hill, we kept away to the right, and spent some time amongst the ruined columns of the Temple of Juno, taking, on our way back to the tent, a cursory view of the remains on each side of us.

October 12.—The destruction of the Temple of Jupiter has been very complete, and its ruins lie scattered in all directions beyond the enclosed area. Blocks of fluted stone, once

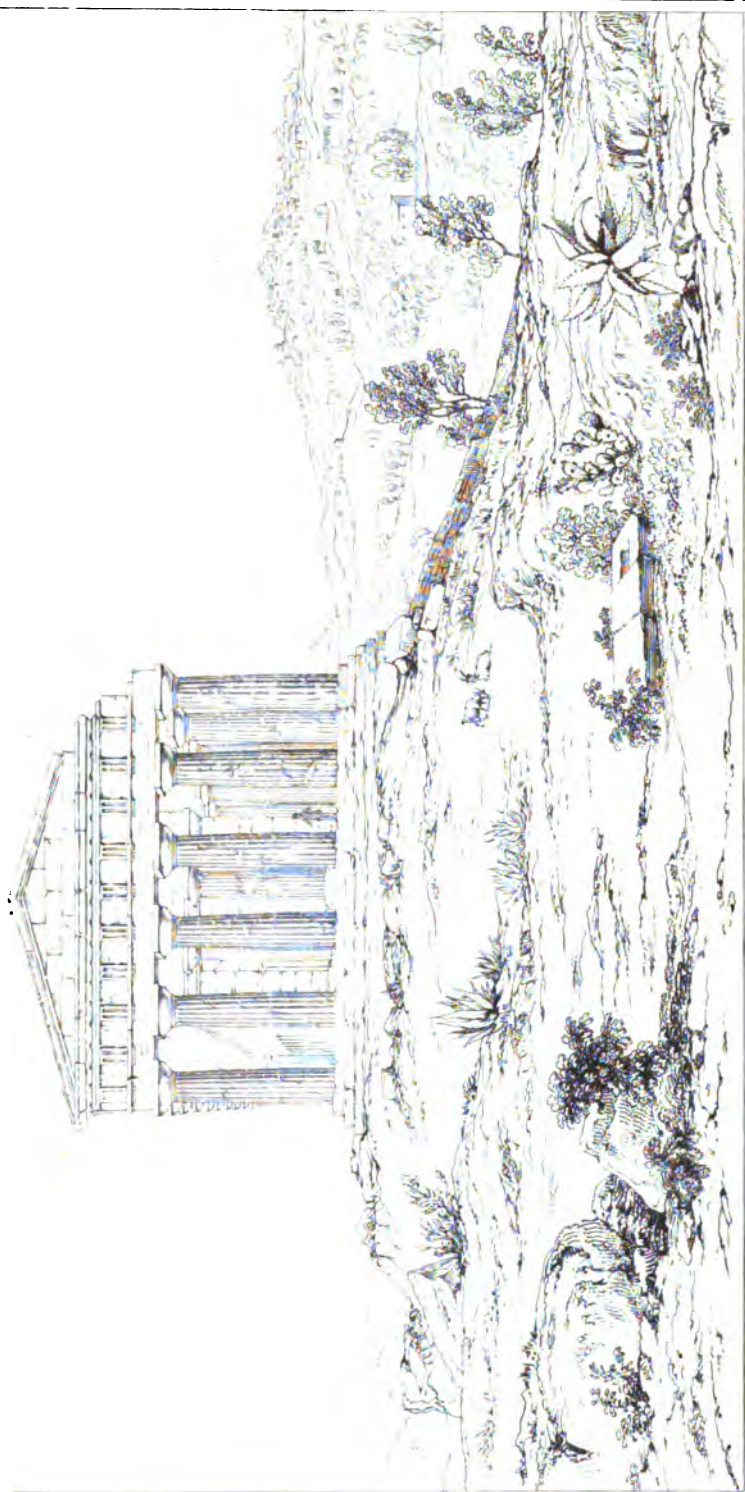
parts of pilasters, stones with sculpture still visible on them, others showing the stucco with which they were originally coated, are found for some distance outside the circuit of the walls. During our early meal more visitors from town came in, several lawyers were amongst them, and one very pleasant little person, the Abate Lopresti, with whom we swore an eternal friendship, and who was as communicative as civil. He proposed a walk, which we gladly assented to, and preceding us, just as the Antiquary did his victims at St. Ruth's, he started off, pointing out to us the various remarkable points as we approached them, and quoting with the greatest fluency Thucydides, Diodorus, and Polybius, but using the Latin versions. Between two hills to the south we passed the remains of the Meta or goal, round which the horses for which Acragas was celebrated were exercised. This called forth the appropriate lines from Virgil, which were delivered with great emphasis.* Thence we reached the *Piscina* or large tank formed for the purpose of keeping up a good supply of fish for the tables of the luxurious inhabitants. It was one of the works made by the prisoners; and swans and other aquatic birds being kept on it, the banks formed a favourite promenade of the citizens, thus anticipating the modern arrangements of St. James's Park. We did not return to our quarters until late in the evening, having engaged our new friend to dine with us the following day, he undertaking to give us the benefit of his local knowledge in the morning.

October 13.—Fortunately the Abate was a good deal be-

* Virg. *Æn.* iii. 703.

behind his time in keeping his appointment, as, very soon after we had concluded our breakfast, Signor Politi, the rival antiquarian, made his appearance, and we were glad to escape seeing the proverb "two of a trade," &c., acted. He stayed for some time, and I need hardly say that the discourse tended wholly in one direction, Agrigentum and its wonders. Signor Politi shines principally as an artist, Lopresti as a scholar, but both have their respective theories about everything, and this morning we heard those of the Abate unmercifully ridiculed and pulled to pieces. The Signor at last took his leave, we promising to pay him a visit at his studio the following morning, and inspect his museum.

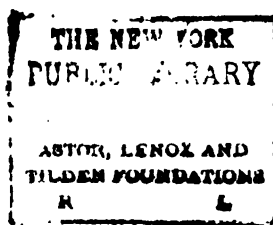
About noon the Abate arrived, and finding us quite ready, lost no time, but put on a nightcap under his hat, and led the way as before. Our first halt was at the pillar of Hercules. He discoursed at great length upon this subject, about which he clearly felt great difficulties, and talked so seriously of the matter that our gravity was nearly upset. Cicero, it appears, says that the Temple of Hercules was near the Forum; Lopresti had a site which answered very well for that place, but unluckily Livy places the Forum in a position that would not at all agree with the site of the temple. Accordingly, having heard the *pro* and *con*, we looked at the spokesman, and waited for his solution of the difficulty; "Ma, Io non So," was the answer to our mute appeal. Passing along the line of the city walls, which are honeycombed with numerous tombs, in some of which the chambers are of considerable size, we paused again when we had reached the Temple of Concord. The Abate said this was quite a wrong name, maintaining that



Temple of Concordia

Temple of Concordia, Agrigento, Sicily

Engraved by J. G. Smith, London 1840



October 14.—A smart footman made his appearance, and announced to us that the commandant had put his carriage at our disposal. We took advantage of his kindness to save ourselves a hot walk into town, and went at once to pay our respects and thank him. We found a very gentlemanlike, formal, old officer, who made us all sorts of civil speeches, apologising for not having visited us, "fearful," as he said, "of disturbing our tranquillity."

We did our best to say something neat and appropriate in reply, and shortly after took our leave and proceeded to fulfil our engagement with S. Politi. We found him with some of his pupils in his studio, and spent some time in looking at a variety of matters, all connected with the locality, some of which were very interesting. The value which he set on them was more than we thought them worth, and consequently we did not do any business in that line, but bought his book, "*Il Viaggiatore in Girgenti*," which gives a very good account of everything that is to be seen, though, from the form in which it is put, a dialogue between the traveller and cicerone, it is not the most agreeable to read.

Having concluded the inspection and taken leave of the proprietor, we went off to the stables where our mules were kept, and rode out three or four miles to a locality called Maccaluba, to look at some miniature volcanoes, which throw up mud instead of fire. They are about two feet high, and the craters about as many inches in diameter. The mud is sent up quite cold and very fine. We left the beasts at their quarters as we repassed through the town, and walked home. One of the civic authorities, with his lady, the latter French by

birth, called on us, and sat with us for a long time. Later in the day the commandant drove down. After the usual prefaces we begged that he would remove the sentries, as we had no apprehension in his district. His reply was, that it was done to ease his mind, adding: "Had I thought there was danger, I should have come myself."* After that they remained of course, and came every morning for their buona mano.

October 15.—Amongst our goods we found a neatly bound Virgil, and map of Sicily, with the Greek and Carthaginian names; and, thinking they were likely to please our Abate, made them over to him, to his great delight. We rode off then to see the sulphur mines, which belong to the see of Girgenti. The income attached to the bishopric is, as far we could learn, 3000 ounces, or about £1500. The mines lie about six miles from the town. We descended into one of them, and found about fifty men at work. They were generally naked, or nearly so, the heat being excessive. The sulphur is got out in a remarkably pure state, and the process of manufacturing is consequently simple, as it is merely quarried out, melted, run into moulds, and marked, and is then ready for export. A great commerce is carried on in this article.

When we returned to the tent we found the cook and butler belonging to the commandant's establishment waiting our arrival. They were the bearers of a very large pasty, which he had sent down to us. The interior was composed of fish and flesh, olives, and a variety of herbs, in a wall of

* Very different is the present state of affairs, when it appears necessary that the country should be occasionally patrolled by troops, to put down the numerous robbers who infest the roads, to the loss and risk of peaceful travellers.

pastry. A most civil note, and some sweetmeats, accompanied it. We replied to the note, and, when the servants were gone, discussed the present. After dinner we started to the Temple of Concord.

This fine specimen of genuine Doric is prettily situated, and in the highest state of preservation. It may indeed be said that it only wants a roof to make it perfect. It has thirteen columns at the sides and six at the ends, standing on three degrees. The walls of the cella are perforated with arches on each side, and a staircase remains, which led originally to the roof. The arches were made on the occasion of the temple being used as a church. This at least was the explanation given on the spot, though it is not satisfactory, as, if it was dedicated to the service of God, more traces would probably remain of its appropriation to Christian purposes.*

October 16.—A rumour prevailed that an invitation to dinner was on its way to us from the commandant, but lapse of time proved that it was only imaginary, and we proceeded, as originally intended, to the Temple of Juno. Its dimensions are very nearly the same as those of the temple of Concord,† but it has suffered much from time or violence, and is very

| | | |
|--|-------|---------|
| * Dimensions of the Temple of Concord: | Feet. | Inches. |
| Length, | 129 | 2 |
| Breadth, | 55 | 5 |
| Circumference of columns, | 14 | 11 |
| Breadth of flutes, | 0 | 9½ |
| † Dimensions of the Temple of Juno Lucina: | | |
| Length, | 125 | 0 |
| Breadth, | 55 | 4 |
| Circumference of columns, | 13 | 11½ |
| Breadth of fluting, | 0 | 8½ |

much dilapidated. Only ten of the columns on the south side are standing, and five at the eastern end. The interior is filled with the fragments of those fallen, and the different parts of the cornice that went with them. The chief ornament of the shrine formerly was the picture of the goddess, executed by Zeuxis. The painter, according to Pliny,* enjoyed peculiar advantages for the study of the female form in its highest perfection, which Ariosto thus alludes to :

“ Quando Zeusi l'immagine far volse,
 Che por dovea nel tempio di Giunone,
 E tante belle nude insieme accolse,
 E che per una farne in perfezione,
 Da chi una parte e da chi un'altra tolse.”

ORL. FUR. ix. 71.

Carrying away a small specimen of the stone of which the temples are built, we descended to the valley through the space where formerly the Porta Aurea stood, and visited the pillars said to be part of the Temple of Æsculapius. Nothing else now remains of it. Higher on the hill is the tomb of Theron. It is a square building, of about thirty feet high, with a cornice half-way up, a window on each side, and an Ionic pillar at each angle. When Hannibal (grandson of the general defeated at Himera) invaded Sicily, and attacked Agrigentum, he ordered the tombs to be destroyed. That of Theron was struck by lightning, and such an event being looked on as ominous, it was spared from destruction ; and Hannibal dying, Hamilcar, who succeeded to the command, gave orders to desist from further injury. The army under

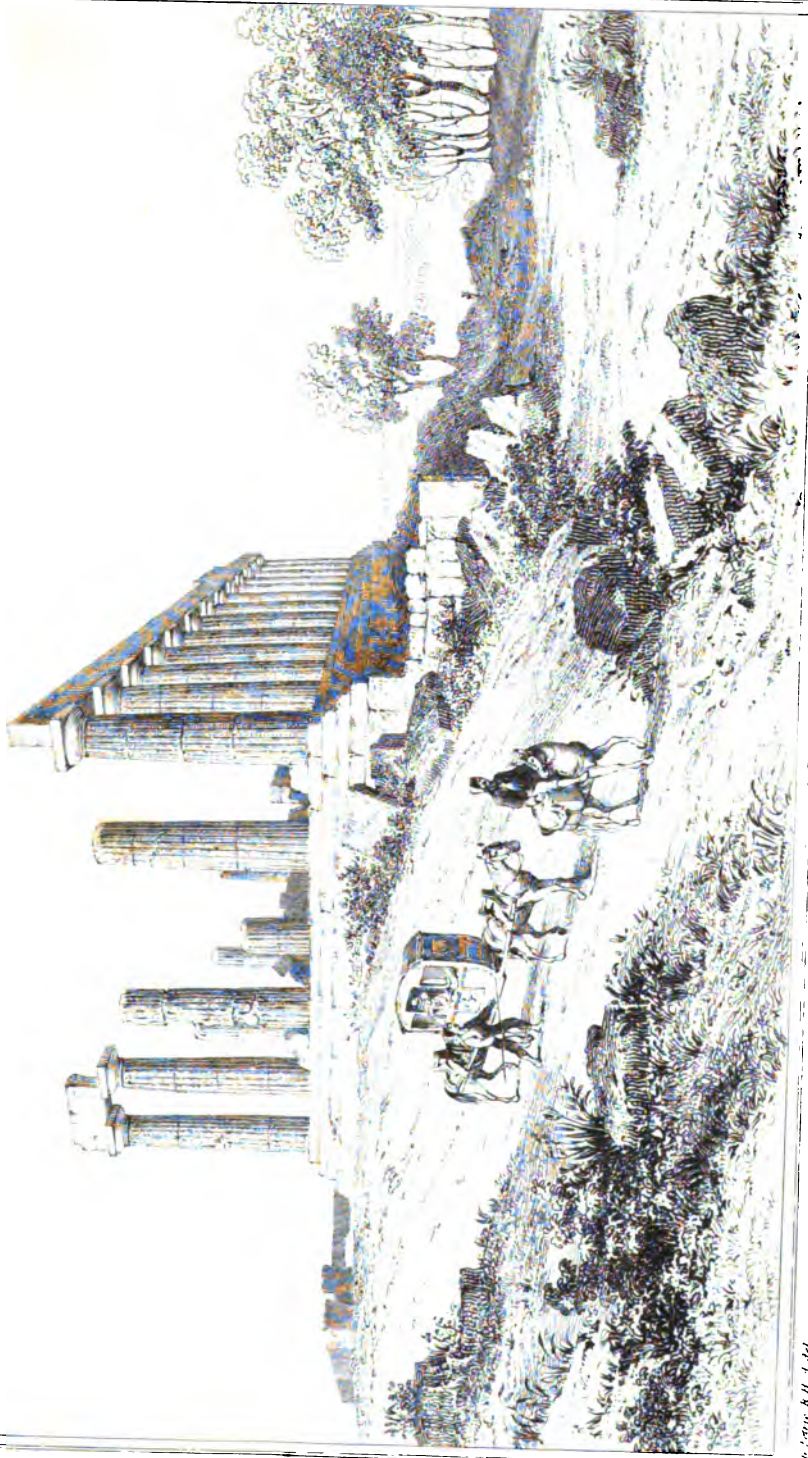
* Nat. His. 5.

J. H. Colver, Jr.

THE TEMPLE OF VENUS, POMPEII, ITALY. 1849.

THE TEMPLE OF VENUS, POMPEII, ITALY. 1849.

W. H. Colver, Jr.



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his command avenged by their victory on the southern coast the former disgrace of their countrymen. Thus ended our exertions at Girgenti, for, agreeable as our sojourn had been, we had not time to waste; so, taking a farewell look at the scene which had become so familiar, we returned, not without regret, for the last time to our Olympian quarters.

October 17.—Best friends must part. At ten to-day the tent was struck, packed, and, with the rest of the baggage, sent down to the port, there to await our arrival. We had to go up to the town to pay a visit to our banker, and provide the sinews of war. That matter transacted, we took leave of Lopresti, who invoked on our heads the blessings of "Il vero Giove," and insisted on our taking some prints of the temples by way of souvenir. Escorted by Galluzzo, a boy who had served us faithfully during our stay, we proceeded to the cathedral, which we had not before seen. The building in itself offers little to remark upon. There is a picture in it said to be by Guido, but the most remarkable object is an ancient sarcophagus, richly sculptured on the sides and ends with the story of the death of Hippolytus at a boar-hunt. It is in good preservation, and a fine specimen, and is now used as the baptismal font. About noon we left the town, taking the road to the port, where we found our mules, and proceeded towards Siculiana, which we passed through, and halted for the night in sight of Monte Allegro.

CHAPTER XIII.

MODE OF TRAVELLING.—LIFE ON THE ROAD.—SCIACCA.—NATURAL HOT
BATHS.—SELINUS.—OVERTHROW OF TENT.—MARSALA.—TRAPANI.—
EGESTA.—ALCAMO.—PALERMO.

OCTOBER 18.—Before taking a further step in advance, I ought to give some idea of our ordinary day's work, and the sort of country we travelled over. Daylight usually found us stirring, and as soon as possible we made a fire and prepared for breakfast, which consisted simply of bread and chocolate. As soon as the tent was packed, the mules were loaded, and we were mounted somewhere about 7 A. M. Our day's journey averaged about twenty-five miles, and the pace about three miles an hour. We generally halted about 1 P. M. for a couple of hours, when we dined and fed the mules, and travelled on for a few miles more, pulling up about an hour before sunset, as it got dark so immediately afterwards that we liked having all set to rights previously.

There was from Syracuse to Marsala but little variety in the road over which we went. Road, indeed, it should hardly be called, as it was really nothing more than a track worn by the constant passing of cavalcades of mules. Here and there, in the vicinity of the larger towns, there were for a short distance approaches of a more respectable nature, but

of *bonâ fide* roads there were but few, and those all leading to the capital; and as we, for the most part, kept close to the coast, they were of little use to us.

The mules, used to carrying heavy loads, and accustomed to a regular pace, were with difficulty urged into a trot, and it was still harder to get them to go abreast, where the space allowed. Ordinarily, therefore, they marched on with us, following each other, from morning till night; still if there was a fountain, or any other place where they had been used to stop, stop they did, and I doubt whether the severest of whips would have got them by, without at least a very determined resistance on their parts. They are, it must be owned, provoking animals, but great comforts in going over rough rocky ground, as, if let alone, a mistake is seldom made; and at the end of our journeying, I was quite sorry to part with the old beast which had carried me so far, and with which, by feeding and looking after him, I had at last got on pretty intimate terms.

Monte Allegro, when reached, by no means justified its cheerful appellation, being as wretched a little place as need be, where we with difficulty procured the scanty provisions we required for the day. Descending again, we jogged along more level ground, in company with a mule covered with bells, which carried the mail from Girgenti, and did not leave us for several miles. The road at one part lay along the side of a large piece of water, on which were multitudes of wild fowl. We got to Sciacca at 1 P. M., having crossed, as we drew near to the town, many plantations of rice. The town did not boast of anything worthy the name of an *albergo*, and the *fondaco* at which we were obliged to put up the mules

was filthy in the extreme, women rolling and carding cotton in the only available room. Such as it was, we had to make the best of it, and, as soon as we had dined, got away and set out to see the *stufe*, or hot baths, for which this town is noted, and which are much frequented by invalids.

They are within the precincts of a convent, on a hill about an hour's walk from the town, and are situated in a dark deep cavern. Near the entrance are seats for the bathers, and the thermometer rose to 102° Fahrenheit in the steamy atmosphere. We did not think it necessary to go very far into the cave, though the monks told us that the "voragine" was only forty yards distant. Minos, King of Crete, lost his life here by suffocation, in the days of King Cocalus. Several young monks from a neighbouring convent joined us, and a merry set they were, full of jokes and fun. We strolled into the town together, stopping for a little time at another bathing establishment, supplied by a spring of hot water strongly impregnated with sulphur, and much in vogue for the cure of cutaneous disorders. From the hill we had a view of the island of Cossyra, now Pantalaria.

When we got back to the fondaco, we lost no time in getting the party together, and left the dirty place without delay. We had wasted a good deal of time with our walking and talking, so that there was not much left for further progress. We got down again to the sea and halted.

October 19.—A few miles beyond the dry bed of La Poggia, we were brought to a stand by the river Belici, whose stream was too deep to allow the mules to ford it; we consequently proceeded up the left bank until we reached

a bridge and toll-gate, where we went across. This river was the ancient Hypsa, and is one of the few which are perennial. Five hours' travel brought us on to the plain upon which the ruins of the temples of Selinus are situated, they having been in sight for some time previously. The weather looked threatening, and we lost no time in fixing ourselves in the most sheltered spot we could find, which was at the eastern end of the largest of the three temples.

These remains exist in close proximity to each other, and are commonly known as the Pileri de' Giganti, a name not ill-chosen, when the size of the blocks here and there used is considered. My antiquarian knowledge not being extensive, the appearance of the ruins puzzled me, and I was unable to determine whether they had been once completed, and had fallen owing to some convulsion of nature, or whether they had never advanced beyond a state of preparation for erection. In the great temple the columns of one side lie on the ground parallel to each other, with the greatest regularity, so as hardly to admit of the first supposition; while the various stages of perfection in which the stones appear, some columns being circular, others cut into polygons and scored for flutings, while a few are completely finished, lead me to believe that in all probability some sudden stop was put to the progress of the work. The area of the temple contains a mass of capitals, cornices, and triglyphs, in great confusion; one piece of the architrave measured twenty-five feet in length by about six feet square at the end. This district suffered greatly in the wars between Selinus and Ægesta, and the Carthaginian

allies of the latter destroyed indiscriminately, under the command of Hannibal, the son of Giscon.

October 20.—Such was the confusion of the masses of stone, that any accurate measurement of the eastern and western temples was impracticable. That in the centre was more manageable, and the results are given below.* Some excavations seemed to have been recently made. Into one or two we crawled, but saw little, except some remains of stucco painted in bright colours. It was near these ruins that the marbles, known as the Selinuntine, of which there are casts in the British Museum, were discovered. They consist of relievi, and formed part of the decorations of one of the temples. They were probably the production of artists from the school of Ægina, which flourished about 500 B. C. Across a small valley to the west are the ruins of three more temples. They are in just the same sort of state as those described, and any accurate measurement was out of our power. In one of them lay a column formed from one block of stone, twenty-five feet in length, and eighteen feet in circumference. The

| | Fest. | In. |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----|
| * Length, | 202 | 0 |
| Breadth, | 81 | 0 |
| Circumference of columns, | 18 | 4 |
| Length of triglyph, | 4 | 10 |
| Width of flutings, | 0 | 11 |
| In large temple : | | |
| Diameter of columns, | 10 | 6 |
| Square of capital, | 12 | 9 |
| Length of triglyph, | 7 | 2 |

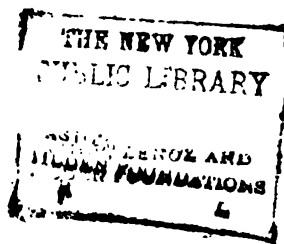


W. J. L. 1850

MISSION OF THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AT THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER, CALIFORNIA

Engraved by H. W. & S. Smith, Dublin, 1850

1850



same curious regularity in the position of the pillars, which is so striking in the temples to the east, is also observable here; and in one place eleven capitals are lying in a row, which look as if just put down from the conveyance on which they had travelled from the quarries.

While we were occupied in examining them, our muleteers and baggage had gone on to Campo Bello, and as the track was not very distinct, we might have had some little trouble in rejoining them, had we not fallen in with an active and civil young fellow, who, upon our making inquiries from him, volunteered to get a donkey and accompany us. Under his guidance we got to the town before the others, and, having dismissed him, went on to the quarries which had afforded the supplies of stone for the temples we had just seen. From the state in which the works have been left, an accurate idea may be formed of the manner in which the large blocks were originally prepared. The diameter of the pillar being settled, and a circle of the size required traced on the rock, a trench was sunk outside it, about a yard in width, and as deep as was necessary. I do not pretend to explain how they managed to detach the great cylindrical mass thus formed, but so far is very clear, as there are specimens to be found in every stage of progress, from the mere circle on the surface to the complete depth, as may be inferred from the blocks taken out. Once detached and raised out of their bed, they were probably rolled over the plain to the locality for which they were destined, and there cut into the precise size required. Of the blocks still left standing in the centre of the circular trenches, one was nine feet four inches high, and ten feet

two inches in diameter; another eight feet high, and ten feet four inches in diameter.

There was nothing more to detain us at Campo Bello, and, on our return to the town, finding the mules rested and ready, we proceeded for some miles further, when we reached a large *masseria* or farm-house, near which, as the evening did not look promising, we halted for the night and dined. A good deal of rain fell in the early part of the evening, accompanied by very vivid lightning.

October 21.—The wind awoke me about midnight, and shortly after, as I lay ruminating, the door of the tent was blown in. Deeming the rush of air to be greater than was pleasant, I got up in the dark to secure it, but whilst trying to do so, I felt a slight commotion in a pile of miscellaneous articles near me, and the next moment they all gave a heave inwards, and I found myself kneeling under heavy rain, the tent having been blown right over. We were all, as may be supposed, pretty soon on our legs, the others extricating themselves from the wet canvass as they best could. No harm, fortunately, had been done by the pole. Shoes and great-coats were first in request, and then, having hauled the canvass over the luggage, we went off to rouse up the muleteers. It was so dark that we were puzzled to make out the *masseria*, though but a very short distance from it; but at length despatched the mules with the servant to bring up everything, and in the mean time got a fire, and made ourselves as comfortable as we could. The luggage arrived about four A. M., everything safe, and we lay down till daylight. The hurried way in which we had *absquotilated*, had

put everything in confusion, and packing was much more tedious than usual. The wet tent too was very unmanageable, and we did not start until the afternoon. Two hours' riding brought us to Mazzara, an old Saracenic town, with embattled walls and towers. "Every house," says the proverb, "contains a priest and a pig." We encountered thirty-four ecclesiastics in our ride through it, but I took no heed of the pigs. The town contains about 9000 inhabitants, and is the see of a bishop.

A curious atmospheric phenomenon is mentioned by Captain Smyth, as occurring occasionally on the coast near this town. It is called *La Marubbia*, and takes place during an interval of unusual stillness in the atmosphere, when the water suddenly rises, rushes violently into the creeks, and recedes with equal velocity, disturbing the mud and tearing up the sea-weed. These alternations continue for a time varying from half an hour to two hours, and are generally succeeded by a breeze from the south with heavy gusts.

As soon as we were clear through the western gate, we saw Marsala ahead of us, and about fourteen miles distant; the intervening country was flat and uninteresting, and the track, through endless palmettoes, occasionally very rough. At half-past six we were established at the Locanda Nuova, a very fair sort of inn; we had passed just twenty nights in the tent, and were not sorry to have a good roof over us instead of the damp canvass. We were vociferous for supper, but three travellers had arrived previously, and we had to bide our time. "Spät kommt er, doch er kommt," and with it the first really good wine that we had tasted in the country,

and which was not the less appreciated from its rarity:—
“When it seldom comes, it wished for comes.” Indeed the blazing faggots and a bottle of Marsala brought vividly to mind the sea-coal fire and sherries sack of a Dolphin-chamber at home.

October 22.—The comfort of the beds was not so easily relinquished, and as we had but a short day's work before us, we were considerably less matutinal than usual. We were now on the western extremity of the island, Capo Boeo, the ancient Lilybæum. The original town was founded by the Carthaginians, who landed here from Africa under the younger Hannibal. A harbour formerly existed, but it was destroyed during time of war by orders of one of the House of Austria. Some remains of very antique walls still exist. The modern town has but very little in it to attract attention. The church of La Madonna della Grotta is curious, as having pillars, pilasters, &c., all excavated from the rock. It contains a few old paintings, and some letters or characters which I could not comprehend, also a pretty modern statue of La Madonna. Under the church of St. Giuliano is one of the numerous caves which were of old patronized by a Sibyl.

There is great traffic from this town with England, wine being the staple commodity. Three large establishments exist, all belonging to Englishmen. Chance took us to that of Mr. Corlett, where we were kindly received, and every information was given to us by the gentleman in charge. We ordered some wine to be sent home, and bought a small cask by way of a *compagnon de voyage*, which we stowed away upon a fresh mule, along with the various odds and ends collected on the road.

Mr. Woodhouse, so well known as a wine merchant, is the proprietor of the oldest establishment of the three. It has been in existence since the days of Nelson, and is on a very extensive scale. Besides the well-known Marsala, large quantities of various wines are exported from it to all parts of the world. The sweet wines of Lipari and Syracuse are in request, and a good deal is supplied from Bronte and the northern coasts, though it is of a comparatively poor description.

Having perambulated the place, we returned to our hotel and started for Trapani, about eighteen miles distant, at the foot of Mount Eryx. We encountered on the road a lettiga containing a very stout Russian count. The thermometer stood at about 75° Fahr., and he looked most miserably hot and cramped in his little vehicle, somewhat like a polar bear in the tropics. We had hoped to get to the top of Mount Eryx before sunset, but that failed, and it was quite dusk before we reached the Locanda del Sole, where we found a very decent *table d'hôte* set out with silver forks and spoons. The aspect of these hotels reconciled us completely to the overthrow of the tent. Our servant was obliged by a sharp feverish attack to retire to bed with a strong dose.

October 23.—The little cask greatly promoted the harmony of the evening, and its contents were properly appreciated. Trapani, the old Drepanum, is a small fortified town at the foot of Mount Eryx, now S. Giuliano. It extends quite down to the edge of the water, has some very tolerable streets, and the appearance of the whole is cleanly. The Town-Hall is handsome, its façade adorned with statues of Philip V. of Spain, and Victor Amadeus of Savoy. It contains also many

churches and convents. The population is from 10,000 to 12,000 inhabitants.

At the entrance to the port is the Columbara rock, and light-house. This was the goal round which the companions of Æneas rowed in the games which he celebrated in commemoration of the death of his father Anchises.* It is now one of the principal harbours of the island, and a considerable trade is carried on here in salt, tunny fish, and coral. The latter is procured on the coast of Barbary, and manufactured in the town.

On the hill which overhangs the place traces are said to exist of the famous temple of Venus, *Erycina Ridens*, one of the most celebrated fanes of antiquity; but I could see nothing that I could even fancy as having formed a part of it. It had a long run of good fortune; the example of Æneas, who enriched it, having been followed by the natives, and additions were made to its wealth by the Romans when it came into their hands. Hamilcar Barcas held possession of the temple during the first Punic war, and it was only taken after a prolonged struggle. A prison now occupies the ground where it probably stood. I had gone up the hill alone, and the walk had taken more time than I had calculated on, so that, when I returned after dark to the gate by which I had come out of town, I found it shut, and was ordered by the sentinel to go round to some other entrance. I felt somewhat in a fix, owing to my ignorance of the ground, but was relieved from embarrassment by the arrival of a cart-load of people who were

* Vir. Æn. iii. 709.

in the same predicament, and who kindly offered me a place in their conveyance, which I was happy to accept. They did even more for me than I expected, as, after entering the town, they insisted on setting me down at the door of my hotel.

October 24.—Our servant was too ill to leave his bed, so that we decided on putting him into the hands of a medical man, and proceeding straight to Palermo, which we were very desirous of reaching without unnecessary delay. A little outside the town walls stands the church of La Madonna di Trapani. The statue of marble, which is the principal object of veneration in it, came originally from Cyprus. The legend says that the ship which was conveying it to Sicily foundered; the image, however, floated, and was picked up by some fishermen, and deposited here. When we visited it, it was most gaudily adorned with a variety of necklaces and crosses, and no fewer than eleven watches. Leaving it, we trotted on in comfort, having now got upon the high road from Trapani to Palermo. About twenty-four miles from the former we turned off in the direction of the temple of Ægesta, but, after merely getting a sight of it, were forced by heavy rain to make for Calatimimi, where we found shelter at the Locanda di Segesta. In the absence of our usual cook we were left to our own devices, but derived much satisfaction from our own performance.

October 25.—The first view of the temple, to which we proceeded early, is very striking. It stands in solitary grandeur in the midst of desolate hills. The platform on which it is placed overlooks on one side a precipitous descent. It differs from those previously described in having no cella, and the space thus gained in the interior shows to advantage the great size

of the enclosure. The columns are not fluted, and the spaces between the bases are in many parts not filled up, which injures the general effect by making the pillars look too high. It is in other respects very complete.*

In the neighbourhood of the temple are the remains of a theatre, in a very dilapidated condition, but, as usual, with a fine, commanding view.

The inhabitants of this place were the means, through false representations, of involving the Athenians in their disastrous quarrel with the Syracusans. It was afterwards destroyed by Agathocles,† and at a later period, having in some degree recovered its prosperity, became an appendage to Rome. During the whole of our inspection of the temple and other remains, a custode, gun in hand, was in attendance, apprehensive for the safety of his charge. As we rode home we passed an old lady gathering snails, which are collected and eaten by the people, as they were by the Romans before them; and the descendants of the snails introduced by the latter may still be found about the sites of some of their villas in England. They are not considered as wholesome during the autumn; so, at least, said our host, as we superintended the cooking of our macaroni, to which he made an addition of something which he termed a *galanteria*, and which was an improvement.

| | Feet. | Inches. |
|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| * Length, | 190 | 1 |
| Breadth, | 75 | 1 |
| Circumference of columns, | 21 | 4 |
| † Diod. Sic. xxi. Er. | | |



E. W. Cooke & Co.

THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER

As it appeared in the time of the Romans

W. B. Cooke & Co.

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October 26.—The luggage was sent on direct to Alcamo, while I, with Mr. Odell, diverged from the road, and went to look at Castell a Mare, which gives its name to a fine bay bounded by bold cliffs : we reached it in about three hours. A baker in the village supplied us with some very good bread made of yellow Indian corn meal. I often thought of his loaves during the various experiments with the said corn in 1846, when the potatoes failed ; but I never could succeed in getting any bread made which I could say came up to them. A seven miles' ride over very bad ground brought us in the afternoon to the town of Alcamo, on the high road, where we put up for the night at the

“Nobile Locanda del Leone
Lion Hotel, Hotel du Lion,
Kept by Abate Pirrone,
Abbot Pirrone, l'Abbè Pirrone.”

The host, whose ecclesiastical rank was, I suppose, something equivalent to our deacon, was a little old fellow with a remarkable developement of nose. He received us with great civility, and treated us very well. Alcamo contains about 10,000 inhabitants, and is prettily situated under Monte Bonifazio. There are no antiquities in it worth mentioning, and the only thing I know concerning it, of any interest, is that it gave birth in the latter part of the twelfth century to Ciullo D'Alcamo, the first Italian who composed poetry in the *lingua volgare*.

October 27.—Daylight found us on the road in advance of the luggage, we being very anxious to get over the long day's journey to Palermo. Thirteen miles from Alcamo is the

Sala di Partenico, where we halted to feed our mules, and, by special desire of their owners, sat in the stable to see that they were not cheated out of their fair allowance. During the operation we were joined by Signor Marletta, proprietor of the Albergo di Londra at Palermo, to which hotel we had been recommended. By what means, like our friend Lopresti at Girgenti, *Io. non so*, but he seemed to know all about us, as, by the way, did the old Abate yesterday, who talked of the blowing down of the tent, illness of our servant, and so-forth, as if he had been one of our party. After due rest we once more set out for our last stage, and as the day was fine we walked a great part of the way.

At about ten miles from the capital, we got to the summit level of the road, from whence we had a magnificent view of the fine bays of Castell a Mare and Palermo, the latter equal, in my opinion, to the Bay of Naples. The vintage was in full progress, and, "reeling with grapes, red waggons stopped the way," their sides ornamented with the favourite *Anime in Purgatorio*, and strange mottoes,—*"Viva la divina Provvidenza," "Viva Iddio, il Re e la real famiglia."* We passed through Morreale, leaving to another time the inspection of the great monastery of San Martino, and reached Palermo about half-past six; my companion, who had been for some days unwell, being a good deal knocked up by the day's work.

CHAPTER XIV.

PALERMO.

OCTOBER 28. — Despite the proverb, “Vedi Napoli è poi mori,” I liked the prolongation of life which allowed me to compare Parthenope with Panormus ; nor is it a very easy thing to say which of the two capitals possesses the greatest beauties. Palermo lies to the north of an extensive and fertile plain, which stretches on one side to the sea, and is bounded on the others by lofty hills. The fine bay to which is owing its ancient name forms a deep bight between Monte Pellegrino on the west and Capo Zaffarana on the east. The advantages of its position have caused it to be for many ages the favourite residence of the successive rulers of the island, whether Saracen, Norman, or Arragonese. The city is fortified, and about four miles in circuit. Two fine streets traverse it at right angles, crossing each other at the Piazza de Quattro Cantoni. The Toledo attracts attention from the number of very long latticed balconies on each side, belonging principally to religious establishments, who add to their means by letting them to spectators of the great religious processions which annually take place. The royal palace stands at the inland end of the street Il Cassaro, a name derived from the Arabic *al kasr* (the palace). The thoroughfares are full of mendicants,

whose appeals for charity are vociferous and unceasing ; and the bustle in them caused by the antagonism of real business and determined laziness and lounging, though amusing at first, becomes wearisome when curiosity is once satisfied. Along the sea runs a very fine promenade, La Marina, whence there is a fine view of the bay, and which forms the favourite resort of all the rank and fashion of the town.

Signor Marletta's hotel, where we found very good accommodation, is situated at one end of the Toledo. Adjoining it is a large prison, which is somewhat of a drawback to its comfort, as, independently of the disagreeable importunity for charity of those confined in it, to which the inmates of the hotel are subject every time they appear in the street, the nightly hailing of the sentinels to each other every half-hour is tiresome in the extreme, and renders it desirable to secure a bed-room as far removed as possible from their neighbourhood. Our table again boasted of butter, which we had not seen since we left Messina. It is supplied to the town from a dairy belonging to the Crown.

The cathedral is a very fine building, erected in 1185, and richly adorned with marbles and statues, and ornamented by the labours of Gagini and his scholars. The façade bears the inscription,—

“Prima Sedes, Corona Regis, Regni Caput.”

It contains the remains of Count Roger, the Norman founder of the monarchy ; of the Emperor Henry VI. ; and of his son, Frederick the Second. They repose in fine sarcophagi of porphyry, brought hither by the latter monarch. Near the church door hangs an order from the reigning sovereign, that

no female is to be admitted into the church with her head covered; and a picture of the same personage is very conspicuous. In the Toledo the church of S. Salvatore is well worth seeing, from the richness of its decorations and the beauty of the materials employed. That of La Martorana, in the Saracenic style, also deserves notice.

The royal residence stands in the Cassaro, and is a fine old building, fortified, and with a fine entrance: its date about 1120. It was founded by Count Roger. The chief attraction is the very fine chapel, one of the best specimens extant of the Moorish style. The heavy horse-shoe arches, and slender pillars which support them, are very striking. The walls are covered with mosaic, and the whole is resplendent with agate, alabaster, and other rare and valuable stones. Above the palace is the observatory, over which we were politely shown by the director. There are some fine instruments in it, principally brought from London, manufactured by Ramsden and Troughton. Piazzì here discovered the planet Ceres in 1801. Not far from it is the church of San Giuseppe, extremely rich in ornament, but not possessing anything that is singular or otherwise curious.

The Festa d'Ogni Santi occurred during our stay, and all day long the Toledo and Marina were crowded with the belles and beaux of Palermo, both equestrian and on foot. An immense traffic was going on in every quarter in all sort of sweetmeats and bon-bons, destined to be placed in the rooms of good children by the mysterious Beffana. At a short distance from the town is a Capuchin convent where the vaults are remarkable for possessing some drying quality which preserves for

many years bodies deposited there. In the walls are long ranges of niches filled with these mortal remains, the appearance of which, I must say, was to me more ludicrous than edifying. The custom is to buy a niche, and then, when dead and dry, occupy it while skin and bone hold together. The monks are set up in the habit of their order; one old Tunisian king appears in his crown; and the mixed multitude who fill the rest of the compartments are attired as the fancy of their relatives may have suggested. Mr. Brydone likens it to an assemblage of portraits, but the comparison seemed to me little apt, as the features of all are indistinct, and the drying process to which they are subjected before being put up induces to similarity. In Captain Smyth's work is a drawing of the vault, which gives an excellent idea of the place, and the way in which the bodies hang about, from the giving way of the sinews here and there. A small contribution towards lighting up the different galleries was expected. At the Campo Santo the same sort of scene was repeated. We arrived there late in the day, and the vaults looked brighter. A great crowd of the relatives of those deposited there attended, as they did also at the convent, to weep over their lost friends; many strangers too were present, criticizing the proceedings, while a company of priests went their rounds reciting prayers for, and blessing the dead.

Sending forward our mules one morning to the Bocca di Falco, we got a carriage, and drove so far on our way to visit the convent of San Martino at Morreale, having procured a letter of introduction to one of the inmates. At the Bocca di Falco is a royal residence and park, and from thence we rode over steep ground to the entrance of the convent, which is a

very imposing edifice overlooking a pretty valley. The monks were at dinner when we arrived, so that we had a little time to look about for ourselves. The entrance hall is very large, supported by twenty-four pillars of marble, and ornamented by a large statue of St. Martin, represented as sharing his cloak with a beggar. A wide staircase of marble, with a balustrade of alabaster, leads to a spacious gallery, and the entire of the walls and roof being painted in arabesque, the effect is handsome and cheerful. From the corridor opens a very large room called the Sala Reale, where stands a bust of Pius VII. We were here joined by brother D. Matteo Ansell, for whom we had brought the letter, and he escorted us over the other parts of the establishment, which was founded by Gregory the Great, about A. D. 580, and is of the Benedictine order. At the period of our visit it contained about fifty inmates, each of whom had two rooms, with the comfort of which no fault could be found. Convents of this Order are in general wealthy, and more attention is paid in them to the comforts of the monks than is done in other communities, the essence of their Rule being that they are to live in a monastery subject to an abbot. The library consists of above 20,000 volumes, and some fine MSS., though we did not see any that were remarkable for beauty. In the apartments of the abbot hangs a picture by Vandyke, the Descent from the Cross. The museum contains a number of vases from Girgenti, amongst which are some very fine specimens; besides a great many curiosities from a variety of other quarters. The services in the chapel are conducted with a magnificence equal to that which prevails in the other departments, the vestments in the sacristy being

most gorgeous. The absence of the organist prevented us from hearing the powers of the instrument, which we were told was a very fine one. Three miles distant, over an abominable road, is the town of Morreale, through which we had passed on our way to the capital. The cathedral there is curious, with a profusion of mosaic work, in the style of the church of S. Marc at Venice. In it are the tombs of two kings, William the First or Bad, and the second of the name, surnamed the Good. In an adjacent convent is a picture by Fra Morreale, of St. Benedict bestowing his blessing on the good king. This convent is also of the Benedictine order, and is a fine, spacious pile of building.

The principal evening amusement at Palermo consists in the opera and theatres. The former are given at the Teatro Carolino; and at the Ferdinando very amusing comedies were performed, though in the Sicilian dialect, which was not a little puzzling.

The opera, though inferior by many degrees to that at Naples, had great charms, and was well attended. We were fortunate enough in seeing it on one gala night, when the house was brilliantly illuminated, and all the visitors appeared in full dress. The society, as far as my short stay enabled me to judge, was agreeable and easy. The Principessa Partana, to whom I was presented, appeared to be the leader of the *ton*, and the *élite* of the city were to be met with nightly either in her box at the opera or at her palazzo. The Prince her husband has been much employed in diplomacy.

The celebrated massacre of the French, better known under the name of the Vespri Siciliani, commenced in this city, and a few words of explanation of the causes which



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Fig. 1. View of the Bay of Kermadec, 1890

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led to it may not be here out of place. Pope Urban IV., who assumed the tiara in 1261, granted the kingdom of Naples to Charles of Anjou, who overran Sicily with an army under the command of Philippe de Montfort. The conduct of that officer and his subordinates towards the inhabitants was such as to call for a remonstrance from Clement IV., successor to Urban, and who had previously been a warm supporter of Charles. The Sicilians too sent a supplication to Queen Beatrix, praying for redress ; but no attention was paid to either Pope or people, though fresh taxes were imposed on the island to assist the king in his designs against other countries. The endurance of many was, however, worn out, and, amongst other malcontents, a private individual, Giovanni di Procida, a native of Salerno, who for political reasons had taken refuge in Sicily, commenced a series of operations which resulted at last in the overthrow of the tyrant.

The project of Giovanni was to offer the throne of the island to Peter III. of Arragon, and with that view he proceeded to the Court of Spain, where he was favourably received, and having made the king acquainted with the state of affairs, he received some pecuniary assistance, and returned to Sicily in 1279, where he found matters even in a worse state than he had left them. Martin IV. now occupied the papal throne, and turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances and appeals of the ambassador from the Arragonese Court. A deputation of ecclesiastics sent from Sicily he treated with still less ceremony, imprisoning the Bishop of Patti, who contrived, however, to escape, having bribed his gaolers. Peter III., though naturally offended by the treatment which his minister

had received, did not deem it prudent as yet to appear openly as a supporter of the projects of Giovanni and the Sicilians, but, under pretence of an expedition against the Saracens, collected an army of above 10,000 men, with provisions and means of transport. No notice had hitherto been taken of the movements of Procida, but the King of France, observing what was passing in Spain, and divining the real motive of the military preparations, sent friendly notice and warning both to the Pope and Charles. The former sent a nuncio to Peter, who dismissed him with an equivocal answer. Charles, though a party to the Pope's counsels, did not deem it necessary to do anything in the way of precaution. In the commencement of the year 1282, Peter landed in Africa with the apparent wish to carry out the alleged object of war with the Moors. Giovanni at the same time traversed Sicily in all directions, haranguing the principal natives, exciting the passions of the populace, and urging the most influential of all classes to repair to Palermo in order to direct the popular movement which he expected shortly to commence. Great numbers yielded to his solicitations, and repaired to the capital at Easter. An accident applied, as it were, the spark to the train. A French officer insulted somewhat grossly the wife of a Palermitan noble, who formed one of the crowd of spectators of the ceremonies on Easter Tuesday, the 30th of March, and by his conduct precipitated the revolution, and lost the island to his sovereign.

“Attesi avrebbe li suoi regi ancora,
Se mala signoria che sempre accuora
Li popoli suggetti non avesse
Mosso Palermo a gridar, Mora, Mora.”

DANTE, PARAD.

A young man who stood by avenged the injury summarily, by running his sword through the body of the aggressor.

The cry of "Death to the French" was quickly raised, and the bells of the churches ringing out at the time for vespers gave rise to the name by which the event is now known. The unfortunate Frenchmen who were present at the church of San Spirito, where the affray commenced, were soon despatched: the infuriated multitude then entered the city, and, sparing neither age nor sex, desisted from the work of blood only for want of victims upon whom to exercise their vengeance.

No time was lost by the chief actors in this tragedy in repairing to those districts in which they had influence, where the same scene was day after day repeated; and in less than a month the whole island was freed from these detested enemies. Only at Sperlinga no blood was shed, and the gate of that town still bears the following line in reference to that singularity:

"Quod Siculis placuit sola Sperlinga negavit."

Messina was the last place to follow the example of the capital, but before the end of April the banner of Charles had ceased to float on the fortress of that town.

Vengeance was vowed by him against the ill-fated islanders, and Messina was first attacked, but resolutely defended. Giovanni di Procida set out at once for the Arragonese Court, to claim the support promised, and in August Peter appeared before Trapani with a strong force, and, going from thence to Palermo, was solemnly crowned by the Bishop of Cefalù. A curious correspondence ensued between the rival

monarchs, in the course of which a challenge to personal combat, each to be accompanied by 100 knights, was given and accepted. The artifices of Peter and opposition of the Pope prevented the affray from taking place, and Charles subsequently suffered severely by the loss of his fleet, and some of the maritime towns. His death in 1285 left Peter in temporary tranquillity.

Such are the leading facts connected with this tragic event, by which it appears that the massacre was not premeditated, or carried out in different localities at a fixed time, but was rather the sudden explosion of hatred caused by a deep sense of long-endured injuries and accumulated wrongs.

Amongst the charitable establishments of the town one of the most remarkable is that for lunatics, under the direction and superintendence of Baron Pisani. It is somewhat fanciful in the construction, being built upon the plan of an old Roman villa, with gardens and baths, all kept in the very highest order, and in great part the work of the inmates of the house. Over the entrance is the inscription, "*Stultorum infinitus est numerus.*" The patients are divided into the great classes of paying and non-paying: these again according to the nature of their complaints. They who pay have the privilege of a private room. We saw them all at dinner, which consisted of soup, meat, bread, grapes, and a small allowance of wine, served in a most comfortable way. All possible liberty is allowed to them, and the old-fashioned methods of restraint are nearly unknown. The mottoes, "*Non sonat hic stridor ferri tractæque catenæ,*" over one door, and over another, "*Prudenza è Umanità,*" indicate the principles on which all

is carried on. The Baron, with whom we had a good deal of conversation, appeared most kind and judicious in his manner towards the invalids. For his time and attendance to the free patients, he receives 4000 ounces each year, the fees from private patients being a matter of agreement. The garden, cultivated by the lunatics, is full of plants, some very rare. We observed the papyrus amongst the rest, which is to be seen also at a small public garden near the asylum, called *Il Papyreto*.

The convent of *Sta Rosalia*, the patroness of the city, stands on *Monte Pellegrino*, which forms the western shore of the beautiful bay. The ascent, which is a rough pavé, begins about three miles from the city gates, and goes in a zig-zag course up to the cave where the saint formerly dwelt. This has been formed into a church, in which is her statue dressed in and spoiled by draperies of gilt metal. The saint was a princess of Norman blood, and left the court of Count Roger to spend her life in solitude and prayer. Her festa, on the 15th of July, is the day on which Palermo may be seen to the greatest advantage, as people flock in from great distances to see the procession of the image through the town. The view of the town and plain from the ground near the church is very beautiful, presenting a view of highly cultivated country, abounding in aloes, Indian figs, and evergreens of all descriptions, and dotted with villas. Far less agreeable was the aspect of the dirty streets to which we returned, filled with troops, the garrison amounting to 6000 men, and the batteries, as at Messina, directed against the town. *Monte Pellegrino* was in ancient times *Mons Ercta*, and a stronghold of the Cartha-

ginian forces. At the foot of the hill stands La Favorita, a royal residence surrounded by a preserve for game.

Another pretty object in the environs is La Zisa, a villa built by one of the Saracenic governors for a favourite daughter. It is quite in the Moorish style, with a curious entrance, and *patio*, with pillars, fountain, and mosaics; the rooms ornamented prettily with decorated arches, windows, and ceilings. From the roof is a very lovely view of the town, bay, and surrounding mountains.

Nothing could exceed the kindness and attention which we received during our stay, from the Consul, Mr. Walsh, and the rest of the English mercantile and professional gentlemen here resident. The house of the former was ever open to us, and from some of the others we received the greatest assistance, at a time when it was of much importance, together with a variety of information about the system of government and commerce, and plenty of gossip of a lighter and more amusing nature. Through their good offices we got rid of a quantity of heavy baggage, which was forwarded to Naples, and we prepared to start for Messina. The latter days of our stay were occupied with visits to a variety of shops and the studios of different artists, from whom we procured the drawings from which most of the engravings in this volume are taken. I am afraid that in considering them as *original* drawings we were a little wrong, though they were very nicely executed. Our servant had joined us from Trapani, much pulled down by his illness, but quite fit to take to the road again, and we wound up the last evening by a general card-leaving on all our acquaintance.

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CHAPTER XV.

LEAVE PALERMO.—LA BAGARIA.—VILLA PALAGONIA.—TERMINI.—CE-
FALU.—S. STEFANO.—SANT' AGATA.—PATTI.—FONDACO DELLA NU-
CILLA.—RANDAZZO.—BRONTE.

NOVEMBER 11.—Marletta's hotel was unquestionably the Clarendon of Palermo, and whencesoever he had imported his ideas of London comfort, he had also brought a very good notion of the way to run up an account. That little matter arranged, and all being ready, we got off, our host volunteering to accompany us as far as Termini, where he had business of his own to look after. Crossing the luxuriant plain on which the capital stands, we reached, in about three hours, La Bagaria, a villa of the Principe di Butera. Nothing can be more beautiful than the view from the gardens, and the disorder in which they were allowed to remain looked worse from the contrast with the lovely scenery around them.

The Palermitan nobles have exercised their taste somewhat capriciously in the decoration of their villas and pleasure-grounds. In the garden I am now describing is a model convent, containing several cells, in each of which is a wax figure of a monk, as large as life, and dressed in the habit of one or other of the numerous ecclesiastical orders. In two rooms attached to it are groups of a lady and her attendant

cavaliere in pensive attitudes. The villa Palagonia is still more remarkable for its grotesque style of ornament, on which large sums of money must have been expended. The artist must have had in mind the opening lines of the *Ars Poetica*, as he has left behind him, carved in stone, a variety of figures, such as lions with human heads, large birds with cows' tails, and so-forth, which stand both inside and about it. The banqueting room is large, and coated completely with pieces of coloured glass, though, from want of care, they are too dirty to produce much effect. The ceiling is completely lined with mirrors, and the angles of the room filled with large pyramids of china of all sorts, in which tea-pots of all shapes and sizes principally abound. But, however questionable the taste thus displayed, no difference of opinion can exist as to the magnificence of the adjoining saloon. It is a very fine square of forty-five feet, the walls from the floor to the mirrored ceiling covered with large slabs of highly polished agate, the effect of which is excellent; round the room are statues, in suits of coloured marble. From the terrace we took a farewell look at the beautiful scene which we were just about to leave, and then turned our faces towards Messina.

In spite of the repose of Palermo, the mules were not in very good case, and our progress, once we got among the hills, was slow. The baggage had preceded us to Termini, where we arrived in the dark; and mine host of the Londra, who had kept close to us all day, when he was of no use, disappeared just when he would have been of service. We found everything at last at the Locanda D'Inghilterra.

November 12.—The town is pleasantly situated on ground

sloping gradually to the sea. Behind it rises the lofty Monte Calogero. The population, which amounts to upwards of 12,000 inhabitants, is chiefly employed in the tunny fishery, and other maritime pursuits. The hot springs are much frequented, and near them a neat bathing establishment has been erected, which is kept in good order. In two hours and a half we reached the Fiume Grande, at the mouth of which stood Himera, where the great battle referred to when describing Agrigentum was fought under Gelon. The town gave birth, in 642 B. C., to Stesichorus, one of the earliest of the Greek lyric poets. On the banks of the river the *stradone* from Palermo ended, and the track which we had afterwards to follow was bad in the extreme. One of our baggage mules fairly gave in, and we were obliged to hire another to assist him. We took consequently a considerable time in working our way to Cefalù. This town is walled, and well situated on the sea coast, at the foot of a high cliff. Large quantities of manna, which is an exudation from a species of ash tree common to the mountains in this part of the island, are collected, and the quality is considered as remarkably good. There is a fine cathedral in the town, built by Count Roger; the architecture is Moorish, with great quantities of Mosaic work, and a variety of marble statues of different martyrs, with their appropriate emblems.

November 13.—Continuing our journey along the coast, we now lost sight of Monte Pellegrino. The track led us through large plantations of manna, and by the villages of Pollina and Finale to La Marina di Tusa, a suburb of the town of the same name, which stands on higher ground in the

vicinity. Our day's journey ended at San Stefano, which we reached just in time to avoid a storm which had been for some hours brewing. The town lies close to the sea, and from it there is a pretty view to the east and west, with some of the Lipari Islands in sight to the north. We were agreeably surprised to find a very decent hotel, the Locanda Della Porta di Palermo, quite new, and consequently clean.

November 14.—For six miles the track followed the shore, crossing the mouth of the Fiumara di Caronia. The town from which it takes its name stands on high ground inland, and occupies the site of the ancient Calacte, founded by Ducetius, and mentioned by Diodorus and Herodotus.* The population seemed to be principally occupied in the manufacture of charcoal, of which, as well as of cork, there is a great export trade. From thence for at least seven miles the whole face of the adjacent country was one thicket of myrtle. Crossing the Fiume Furiano, we reached Acquadolcè, a gay little village, dependent apparently on the proprietor of a good *Casa Particolare*, which we halted to look at. We found a very snug house, gaily painted in fresco and arabesque, with large gardens attached to it. The orange and lemon trees were very fine. The ground was heaped with the pulp of the latter fruit, the rind having been stripped off for the manufacture of something connected with the colouring of calico. It looked like a great waste of lemon juice.

Three miles to the eastward we got to the village of Sta Agata, lying under the mountain of St. Marco. The albergo

* Diod. Sic. xii. 8, 29. Herod. vi. 22.

was so extremely bad that we could not stand it, and, having gone in quest of other quarters, finally stumbled on a certain Don Bernardo Bordonaro, whose house was put at our disposal. There we found very good rooms and beds, with silver forks and spoons, and the additional advantage of the company of our host, and his loquacious neighbour, the barber, who fully maintained the character of his craft for loquacity and love of gossip.

November 15.—We passed at an early hour through the town of San Marco, which exercises powers of jurisdiction over this portion of the country. Near it we crossed the broad bed of the Rosa Marina torrent, leaving Terra Nova to the right. At Brolo we gave the mules an hour's rest, of which they stood in some need after the tedious ascent of the mountain of St. Orlando. After leaving it the road wound round the rocks close to the sea, and in one spot it was necessary to go into the water to get round a projecting point of rock. It was raining heavily, and, not wishing to get more wet than was absolutely necessary, I dismounted, and clambered over the obstacle, letting the mule take his chance of the inevitable ducking. We had been annoyed all day by the quantity of dust flying in the air, which we hoped might be caused by an eruption of *Ætna*, then about forty miles distant. On our arrival at Giojosa, we found a tidy little establishment called *La Locanda Della Muta*, in compliment to a deaf and dumb daughter of the host, and heard too that our conjectures were correct, and that the mountain was actually at work in the neighbourhood of Bronte.

November 16.—We spent the evening rejoicing at our

good fortune in being enabled to witness a scene which had often been thought of and longed for, and no time was lost in proceeding to Patti. That town luckily had nothing of note to be seen in it, as I fear the desire to get to Bronte would have made us very careless of *antichità*. At the albergo we, therefore, only halted for a sufficient time to make the necessary changes in the disposition of our baggage, to enable us to dispense with some of the mules. We selected the youngest of the muleteers to accompany us, and picked out the strongest of the animals, though it had now come to "bad's the best." Bastiano, an elderly man of about eighteen stone, was left behind at Patti in charge, and all being ready, we put our heads to the south, and set forward. The wind still blew from the direction of Bronte, and the constant fall of light ashes spoke to the height to which they were sent from the crater. The road was tolerable for some way from the town. As we jogged on we overtook a *cacciatore*, gun in hand, who was very civil and communicative, presenting us with some fruit, and making himself vastly agreeable. Matters changed very much when we got amongst the hills, the track being very bad, and the weather anything but pleasant. As, however, there was no help for it, we struggled on through the mud, up hill and down dale, till about four o'clock, when we reached a lonely house, the Fondaco della Nucilla, where we halted per force, the mules declining any more work. The place was miserable in the extreme, but the proprietors, whose appearance was quite in keeping with that of their establishment, were very hospitably inclined, and did their utmost in every way to accommodate us. There being but one room, we were *au fait* at all their

household arrangements. The children, of whom there were several, were poor, swollen, little things, who sat closer to the fire than any persons I ever saw, and were continually asking for water, with which, and walnuts, they were liberally supplied by their parents. We got hold of a couple of chickens, which were soon plucked and put down to boil, while we tried to keep ourselves warm with cigars and big coats. Meanwhile our servant moralized on the happiness of the owners of the house, who had, he said, no knowledge of anything, and no desire of being better off:

“ Their wants but few, their wishes all confined.”

I advised him to set up an hotel, but to choose some more genial scene for the display of his talents. When our meal was over, and our fingers tired of picking the skins off the walnuts which formed our dessert, we went to sleep as best we might; the hostess and children disappearing, *pro tempore*, in some mysterious recess.

November 17.—A most uncomfortable night was succeeded by a most dismal morning, very cold, with a thick mist lying on the hills. The track, too, was but indifferent; but then we could hear plainly the thundering from the mountain, which showed us that at all events we were not too late. We crossed this day the Heræan mountains, one of the ranges which extend from east to west nearly across the island. The sides of the hills were clothed with the finest trees which we had yet seen; oak, ash, and beech, lining both sides of the valley, through which runs the Alcantara. So tortuous is the course of this stream that we forded it nine several times during the day. It forms the boundary of *Ætna* towards the north.

Passing through the village of S. Domenico, we came to Randazzo, and found at the *albergo* a carriage which had brought a party from Bronte, and was waiting for the chance of a return fare. We availed ourselves of this opportunity of giving our mules relief and making ourselves snug at the same time; and transferring ourselves to the vehicle without loss of time, were by two o'clock rattling along the *stradone* which runs from Messina to Bronte, arriving at the latter place in a couple of hours. Three miles distant from it we saw the line which the lava was taking. The hotels were all full, and we had to look for rooms in a private house. Considerable apprehension was felt for the safety of the town, and consequently no little confusion prevailed, the proprietors of houses busying themselves in moving their furniture and valuables to more secure quarters. Our lodgings were on this account completely dismantled, but in time we got beds and bedding, which was the essential point (tables and chairs we were accustomed to dispense with), and, being so far settled, walked out for a short time to the stream of lava. After dark the reflection of the flames was very visible on the sky, while the noise of the discharges was great. We came home congratulating ourselves on our good fortune in thus seeing the volcano in its glory and might, Vesuvius being but a squib in comparison. We found that the eruption had begun on the 2nd instant. Strange to say, although we did not leave Palermo until the 11th, no one there had ever mentioned anything about it to us, though it is hardly possible to think that information had not reached the capital, there being telegraphic communication all along the coast.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ERUPTION.

NOVEMBER 18.—We found ourselves outside the town very soon after sunrise, and having walked for above an hour, got to the foot of the great and dreaded stream. The sight of it was both extraordinary and fearful. The mass extended for a breadth of about 1000 paces, advancing gradually, more or less rapidly according to the nature of the ground over which it moved, but making steady progress. It had formed two branches, one going in a northerly, and the other in a westerly direction. No danger beyond loss of trees or crops was apprehended from the former, but the second was moving in a direct line for the town of Bronte, and to it we confined our attention. The townspeople, on their part, had not been idle. I have before mentioned the clearance which they had made of their goods, but precautions had also been taken outside the town, with a view, if possible, to arrest the progress of the lava; and a very massive wall of coarse loose work was in the course of erection across a valley down which the stream must flow. We heard afterwards, that the impelling power was spent before the strength of this work was put to the test, but had it failed Bronte had been lost. It is not easy to convey by words any very accu-

rate idea of the scene. The lava appeared to be from thirty to forty feet in depth, and some notion of its aspect and progress may be formed by imagining a hill of loose stones of all sizes, the summit or brow of which is continually falling to the base, and as constantly renewed by unseen pressure from behind. Down it came in large masses, each leaving behind it a fiery track, as the red-hot interior was for a moment or two exposed. The impression most strongly left on my mind was that of its irresistible force. It did not advance rapidly; there was no difficulty in approaching it, as I did, closely, and taking out pieces of the red-hot stone; the rattling of the blocks overhead gave ample notice of their descent down the inclined face of the stream, and a few paces to the rear, or aside, were quite enough to take me quite clear of them; but still onward, onward it came, foot by foot it encroached on the ground at its base, changing the whole face of the country, leaving hills where formerly valleys had been, overwhelming every work of man that it encountered in its progress, and leaving all behind one black, rough, and monotonous mass of hard and barren lava. It had advanced considerably during the night. On the previous evening I had measured the distance from the base of the moving hill to the walls of a deserted house which stood, surrounded by trees, at about fifty yards off, and, though separated from it by a road, evidently exposed to the full power of the stream. Not a trace of it was now left, and it was difficult to make a guess at where it had been. The owners of the adjacent lands were busied in all directions felling the timber that stood in the line of the advancing fire, but they could not in many instances do it fast

enough to save their property from destruction; and it was not a little interesting to watch the effect produced on many a goodly tree, first thoroughly dried by the heat of the mass, and, in a few minutes after it had been reached by the lava, bursting into flames at the base, and soon prostrate and destroyed. It being Sunday, all the population had turned out to see what progress the enemy was making, and prayers and invocations to a variety of saints were everywhere heard around. "Chiamate Sant' Antonio, Signor," said one woman eagerly to me, "per l'amor di Dio, chiamate la Santa Maria." Many females knelt around, absorbed in their anxiety and devotion, while the men generally stood in silence gazing in dismay at the scene before them. Our guide was a poor fiddler thrown out of employment by the strict penance enjoined with a view to avert the impending calamity, dancing and music being especially forbidden, even had any one under such circumstances been inclined to indulge in them.

In the evening we prepared for a ride to see the *Bocca di Fuoco*, which was situated near the Monte Lepre, in the upper part of the Regione Selvosa, and at a height of about 6000 feet. We rode for about five miles over ground very similar to that we had traversed on the other side of the mountain, composed of broad tracks of old lava, with occasional patches of vegetation, and here and there a few oak trees. Under the shelter of one of these we left the mules, and proceeded on foot, under the directions of a boy who acted as guide. We reached first a small stream of lava, which had been discharged during the eruption, and followed it until we had got nearly abreast of the crater; then, climbing a hill that

lay between us and it, we came into full view of a scene at once the grandest and most awful that it has ever been my fortune to witness. The evening had completely closed in, and it was perfectly dark, so that there was nothing which could in any way injure or weaken the effect. The only thing to which I can compare it is, as far as can be judged from representations of such scenes, the blowing up of some enormous vessel of war, the effect being permanent instead of momentary only. Directly facing us was the chasm in the mountain's side from which the lava flowed in a broad stream of liquid fire; masses of it had been forced up on each side, forming, as it got comparatively cool, black uneven banks, the whole realizing the poetic description of Phlegethon in the most vivid manner. The flames ascended to a considerable height from the abyss, and high above them the air was constantly filled with large fiery masses, projected to a great height, and meeting on their descent a fresh supply, the roar of the flames and crash of the falling blocks being incessant. Advancing across a valley which intervened, we ascended another hill, and here commanded a view of the ground on which many of the ejected stones fell, and, though well to windward, the small ashes fell thickly around us. The light was sufficient, even at the distance we stood, to enable us to read small print, and to write, with the greatest ease. The thermometer stood at about 40°, but, cold though it was, it was some time before we could resolve to take our last look at this extraordinary sight, and our progress, after we had done so, was retarded by the constant stoppages made by us to watch the beautiful effect of the light, as seen through the *Bosco*, which we had entered on our re-

turn. Owing to the darkness, we were above an hour before we found the place where our mules were secured, and it took three hours more to push our way over the lava to the town, which we reached without a tumble, thanks to our sure-footed animals. We did not get home till after midnight. Our careful servant had refreshments ready, which were by no means unwelcome, and no regret was felt at the news, that he had been unable to get any early conveyance for the morrow. Supper over, we retired to our beds, more from want of chairs than with a view to immediate sleep; for sundry pipes and much discourse about all we had seen brought us well into the small hours before we put out the lights.

November 19.—Before turning our backs on Bronte, we took another look at the lava, and found out from the bystanders some few particulars about the commencement of the eruption. The small stream, alongside of which we had last night walked, appeared on the 4th instant, two days, according to their account, after the commencement of the affair, of which notice was given by a thick cloud of ashes being thrown up. They said that the damage done by the lava was estimated at 30,000 ounces; and the territory of Bronte being fertile and well cultivated, abounding in fine trees, and producing vines and valuable crops, the sum did not seem overrated. It was formerly a royal fief and duchy, and the title and property to the amount of £3000 per annum was given by the King of Naples, in 1799, to Lord Nelson. The modern town contains about 9000 inhabitants.

So many cones have been thrown up on the north-west

side of the mountain during past ages, some of considerable height, that the actual summit of *Ætna* is by no means so striking an object as when viewed from the neighbourhood of Catania. We were not fairly away till the afternoon, and made but a short day's work, going only to Randazzo, where, although the *locanda* was nameless, we found far better and cleaner accommodation than usual.

November 20.—As there was nothing to detain us, we were on the road before eight, A. M., going over the same ground as we had traversed on the 17th, the weather even more disagreeable, cold, and damp than on that day. We kept our line as well as we could across the waste land, but got once completely astray; luckily we made ourselves heard by a *pecoraro*, whose goats were browsing about, and who responded to the call, and came to us. He was dressed exactly like the pictures of Robinson Crusoe, in goat-skins, an axe slung over his shoulder, and a long pole in his hand. He put us into the proper track, and we soon afterwards found ourselves at the Fondaco della Nucilla, the host and hostess as civil as ever, and the children still all but in the fire. We resisted their entreaties to remain, except for the time needed by the mules, and, after a most wretched day, arrived again at Patti. We found our Syracusan muleteer, Bastiano, in great force, quite excited by seeing us again, fancying that we had gone, as he said, to heaven. The Locanda della Piazza turned out to belong to our acquaintance the civil *cacciatore*, who paid us a visit during the evening, and smoked the calumet.

CHAPTER XVII.

MONTE TINDARO.—SITE OF ANCIENT CITY OF TYNDARIS.—TUNNY FISHERY.
—MILAZZO.—MESSINA.—VOYAGE TO PALERMO AND NAPLES.

NOVEMBER 21.—Mine host, who was most polite and attentive during the preceding evening, volunteered his company for part of the onward journey; but the weather looked bad, or he was lazy, or—but, at all events, he relieved his mind by sending an offering of a basket of fruit, and I am not sure that we lost by the exchange. The road along the coast was dismal enough in the drizzling rain that fell. After two hours we left the direct track to Milazzo, and ascended Monte Tindaro, on which the ancient city of Tyndaris once stood. It was founded by a colony of Messinians, who first settled at Zancle,* but being driven out of that region by Dionysius, who wished to remain on good terms with Sparta, they located themselves here, and named their city after one of their own monarchs. Having come under the dominion of the Romans, it suffered much from the rapacity of Verres, who carried away considerable plunder from it, including a famous statue of Mercury. The site of the old town is, as usual, covered with fragments of tiles and other matters of pottery, while some portions of the walls, fol-

* Diod. Sic. xiv. 78.

lowing the line of the cliff, still remain. We met a young priest who was wandering about the place, and he kindly accompanied us to the site of the theatre, and pointed out the beauty of its situation, while he gave us information about the different localities in sight from it. Taking leave of our conductor, we regained, by a steep descent, our road at Oliveri. Near that village is another called Tonnaro, deriving its name either from a corruption of the name of the mountain or from that of the fish, but probably the latter. The inhabitants follow the profession of fishermen with great success, and we saw many of their large boats hauled up on the beach. Tunny is held in the same estimation as it was of old, and the preparations for its capture are made on an extensive scale. It is a gregarious fish, and, in general, makes its appearance in the Mediterranean in the early part of the year; May, June, and July being the months during which it is captured. The nets are of great size, being as much as 1500 feet in length, by 300 in breadth, and from forty to 100 feet in depth. They are divided into four compartments, which communicate. These are secured by anchors or heavy weights, in the line where the fish are known to take, while the upper part is floated by casks. By means of another net which communicates with the shore, the fish are turned towards the first chamber, whence they gradually find their way to the next, and so on to the last and strongest, called the *corpo*, where they are attacked and killed. The tunny which are caught in these hauls belong to the owner of the nets; but everything else that is taken is the perquisite of the assistants. The flesh is good, and a sauce called *garum* is prepared from it. The fish

vary from five to eight feet in length, and the girth is about the same, though the females often exceed these dimensions. When the mules had concluded their feed, we got on to Milazzo, the ancient Mylæ, where the Locanda del Sole received us, after a pleasant ride, as the weather had cleared up, and the evening felt more like spring than winter.

November 22.—The bright days of Milazzo were those during which it was occupied by the British troops, and many were the regrets expressed by the persons on the spot, who spoke of the subject, that the flag of England did not still wave over them. Politics aside, it does seem a great pity that we could not retain the whole concern, as, under good management, it ought to be a valuable addition to any crown. The town stands on a narrow peninsula, extending for some distance seaward. At the furthest point is the castle, which commands the whole of it, and appears to be a very strong place. There are several churches and convents in the town, and its inhabitants are stated to amount to about 5000. In the course of our rambles we fell in with a boy who had formed one of our party when starting originally from Messina, and had been sent back on account of ill health. As he had a mule with him for hire, we dismissed the muleteer who had come from S. Stefano, and re-engaged our friend. After a sumptuous breakfast, to which our servant treated us, as being our last day of riding, we moved off by Venetico and La Rocca to Divieto. At the latter town the whole population appeared to be engaged at cards. We watched their game, which resembled "beggar my neighbour," for a time, and then proceeded to Ibiso. The *stradone* to Messina was here

reached, and by it we wound up the beautiful hills which extend round the city to the west. The road passed through thickets of evergreens, amongst which were the finest arbutus I had ever seen, throwing those of Killarney into the shade. We halted for a short time at the summit, to take a last look at the road we had travelled, and then, sending the baggage and mules in advance, walked down the hill to the city gates, where, to our disgust, we found the animals detained, owing to a dispute with the doganieri. That matter was easily settled, and we soon afterwards found ourselves, after an absence of eleven weeks, ensconced in our old quarters at the Leone d'Oro.

To complete our tour, we engaged a lettiga a day or two after our arrival, and drove off to the Faro di Messina, on the extremity of Cape Pelorus, the north-east angle of Sicily. Seated *vis à vis*, we jingled along the road, quietly realizing the slumbers that I have previously hinted at. The lighthouse, which occupies the extremity of the headland, is fortified, but not any way remarkable in other respects. We were a good deal provoked at finding out from the Consul, that the steamer which plies between Sicily and Naples was shortly expected here from the capital, but would return *viâ* Palermo. Anxious not to lose time by waiting for it, we discussed and rejected a variety of plans for the journey to Naples. At one moment we hoped to be able to reach Taranto, and travel north through that district, which is but little seen by travellers. Difficulties, however, arose, which made that plan impracticable. None of the vessels in harbour were bound our way, and at last we were compelled to sit down and smoke the pipe of

patience. Our visit in September had been so much hurried, that a good deal remained to be seen; and to the various churches and their contents, with the public buildings of the place, our mornings were devoted. The cathedral is a fine spacious building, and the library offers, to those curious about books and manuscripts, much that deserves attention. The port too was always an amusing scene, and we had in the course of our inquiries made acquaintance with several captains of English merchant vessels there loading. At night the theatres presented a ready resource against *ennui*, and in one or other of them we usually spent our evenings.

At last, on the 2nd of December, the "Reale Ferdinando" anchored in the mouth of the harbour. We went on board at once, and secured accommodation, finding that our fate was to return to Palermo, and embarked in the afternoon of the 3rd, our apartment at the locanda being immediately occupied by some other travellers, who had arrived by the *Vapore*, and were on their way to Bronte, too late to see anything beyond the results of the eruption. We sailed before sunset. The weather was very wet, and the Reale Ferdinando, an old vessel, bought from some Scotch company, very slow. Our party below consisted of about fourteen, and got on very harmoniously during the voyage, which occupied twenty-eight hours. We arrived at Palermo too late for pratique: and spent the 5th at Marletta's hotel, who was not a little surprised at our re-appearance, visiting in the course of the day the University, which had been forgotten before, and which merits attention for the antiques from Ægea and Selinus which it contains; and, winding up the evening at the Opera, got under way again

at noon on the 6th. I went on deck at sunset to take leave of Ætna, which now showed his head white with the first snows of winter. Our old engines struck work more than once during the night, but fortunately the weather was calm, and the engineers were able to get matters to rights, though the captain once darkly hinted that he would go back to Palermo. We spent a cold and damp day on board, but dropped our anchor in the harbour of Naples at half-past eight, P. M. Many passengers whom we had not seen till then, they having joined us at Palermo, now made their appearance. A very good dinner was put down, and the fun was kept up till a late hour, Signor Passero, private secretary to Prince Butera, taking the lead in the amusements.

I find that this very pleasantly written
 Book at MS² 28 July 1871. The
 descriptions are very good and there
 is no affectation in 1st style. It
 is to be regretted that the station
 does not run early stage

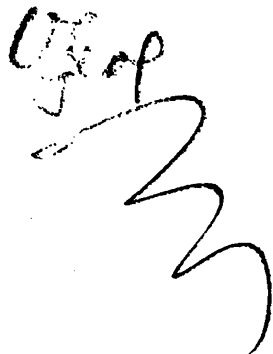
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WITH THE

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|--------------------------------|--------|------|------|--------------------------|--------|------|------|
| | Miles. | Hrs. | Min. | | Miles. | Hrs. | Min. |
| Monte Scuderi, . . . | 16 | 4 | 30 | La Giarretta, . . . | 5 | 1 | 30 |
| Latojanni, | 12 | 4 | 0 | Lentini, | 13 | 2 | 30 |
| Giardini, | 4 | 1 | 15 | Carlentini, | 2 | 0 | 30 |
| Giarre, | 10 | 3 | 0 | Syracuse, | 26 | 6 | 30 |
| Castagno C. Cavalli, . | 6 | 2 | 0 | | | | |
| Zafarana, | 8 | 2 | 40 | 5. SYRACUSE TO GIRGENTI. | | | |
| Nicolosi, | 11 | 2 | 30 | Lungarino, | 10 | 3 | 50 |
| Biancavilla, | 14 | 3 | 45 | Avola, | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| Aderno, | 2½ | 1 | 0 | La Pizzuta, | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Regalbuto, | 15 | 4 | 50 | Terra Nobile, | 16 | 4 | 45 |
| S. Filippo d'Argiro, . | 10 | 3 | 20 | Spaccafurno, | 18 | 4 | 30 |
| Leonforte, | 9 | 2 | 30 | Ispica, | 10 | 3 | 40 |
| Castro Giovanni, . . . | 12 | 3 | 0 | Modica, | 6 | 1 | 45 |
| | | | | Scicli, | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| 2. CASTRO GIOVANNI TO CATANIA. | | | | Donna Lucata, . . . | 5 | 1 | 45 |
| Lake of Enna, | 4 | 1 | 20 | Santa Croce, | 9 | 2 | 15 |
| Piazza, | 8 | 3 | 25 | Scoglietti, | 11 | 2 | 45 |
| Aidone, | 6 | 1 | 30 | Terra Nova, | 15 | 3 | 40 |
| La Gabella, | 14 | 3 | 30 | La Manfria, | 9 | 2 | 30 |
| Catania, | 24 | 5 | 45 | Alicata, | 9 | 2 | 15 |
| | | | | Palma, | 14 | 3 | 30 |
| 3. ASCENT OF ÆTNA. | | | | Girgenti, | 14 | 3 | 30 |
| Nicolosi, | 10 | 2 | 15 | | | | |
| The Bosco, | 3 | 1 | 15 | 6. GIRGENTI TO PALERMO. | | | |
| Casa Inglese, | 8 | 2 | 45 | Port of Girgenti, . . | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Summit, | 0 | 0 | 45 | Siculiana, | 8 | 1 | 45 |

GIRGENTI TO PALERMO—*continued.*

| | Miles. | Hrs. | Mins. |
|----------------------|--------|------|-------|
| Monte Allegro, . . . | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| Sciarra, | 25 | 6 | 0 |
| Selinus, | 18 | 5 | 0 |
| Campo Bello, . . . | 7 | 2 | 30 |
| Mazzara, | 9 | 2 | 15 |
| Marsala, | 14 | 3 | 45 |
| Trapani, | 18 | 4 | 0 |
| Calatiffimi, . . . | 25 | 6 | 0 |
| Castel a Mare, . . | 10 | 3 | 30 |
| Alcamo, | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| Sala di Partinico, . | 14 | 3 | 0 |
| Palermo, | 18 | 4 | 0 |

7. PALERMO TO PATTI.

| | | | |
|---------------------|----|---|----|
| La Bagaria, | 9 | 2 | 15 |
| Termini, | 15 | 4 | 30 |
| Cefalù, | 24 | 5 | 30 |
| S. Stefano, | 24 | 7 | 0 |
| Calacte, | 7 | 2 | 0 |

PALERMO TO PATTI—*continued.*

| | Miles. | Hrs. | Mins. |
|--------------------|--------|------|-------|
| Santa Agata, . . . | 21 | 4 | 0 |
| Terra Nova, . . . | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Capo Orlando, . . | 9 | 2 | 0 |
| Brolo, | 6 | 1 | 30 |
| Giojoso, | 6 | 1 | 45 |
| Patti, | 8 | 2 | 30 |

8. PATTI TO BRONTE.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----|---|----|
| Fondaco d. Nucilla, . | 9 | 4 | 0 |
| S. Domenico, . . . | 10 | 4 | 15 |
| Randazzo, | 5 | 1 | 30 |
| Bronte, | 11 | 2 | 0 |

9. PATTI TO MESSINA.

| | | | |
|---------------------|----|---|----|
| Tyndaris, | 10 | 2 | 30 |
| Milazzo, | 14 | 3 | 30 |
| Divieto, | 16 | 4 | 0 |
| Messina, | 14 | 3 | 30 |

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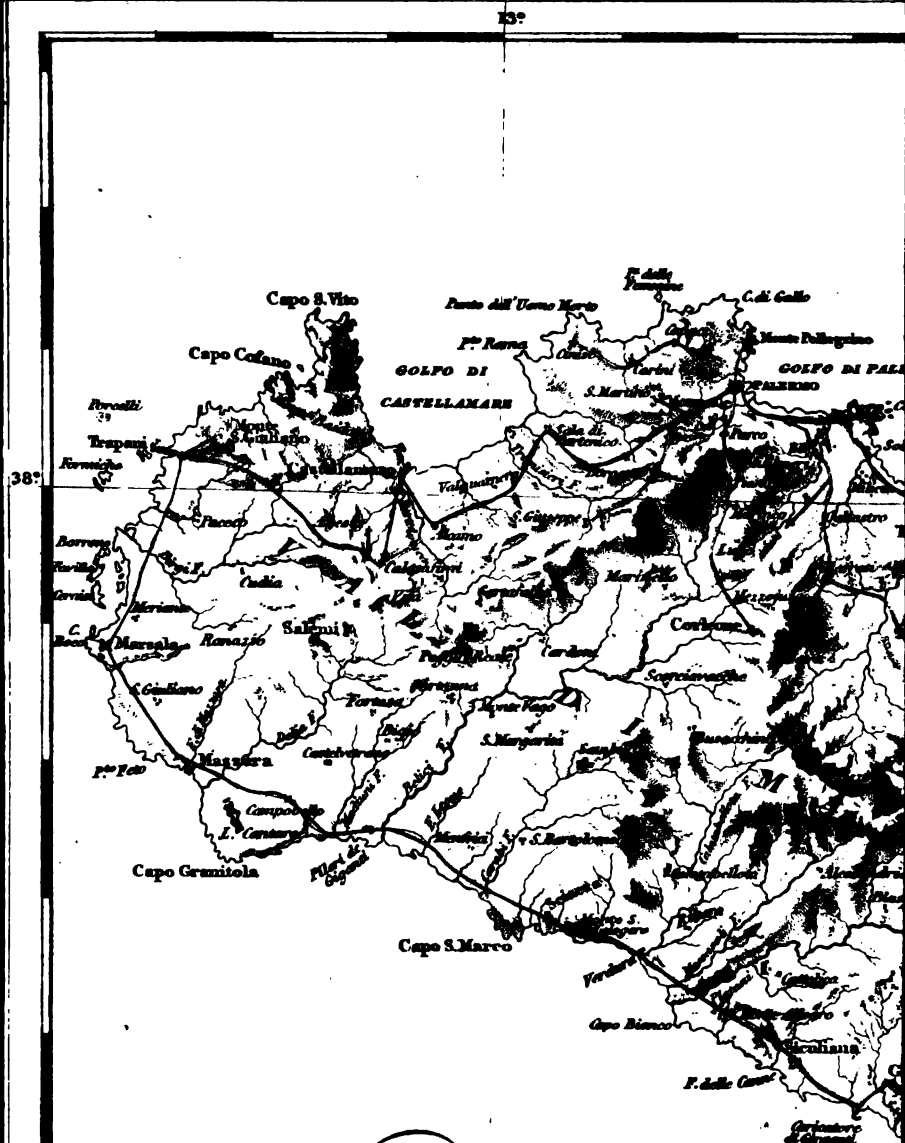
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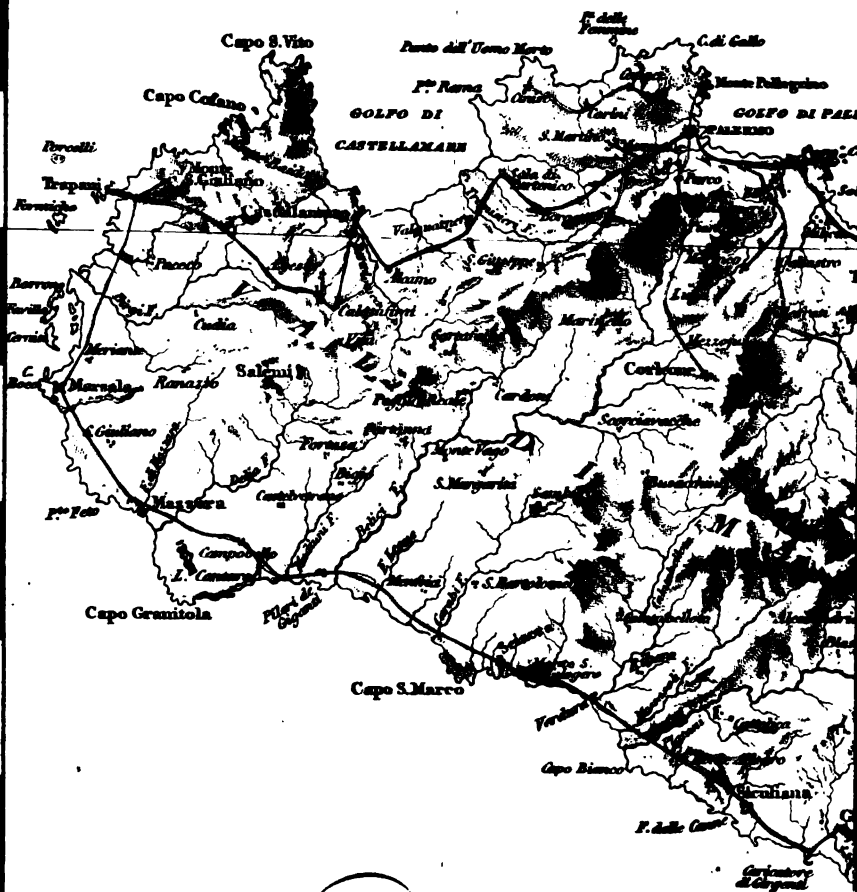
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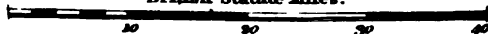
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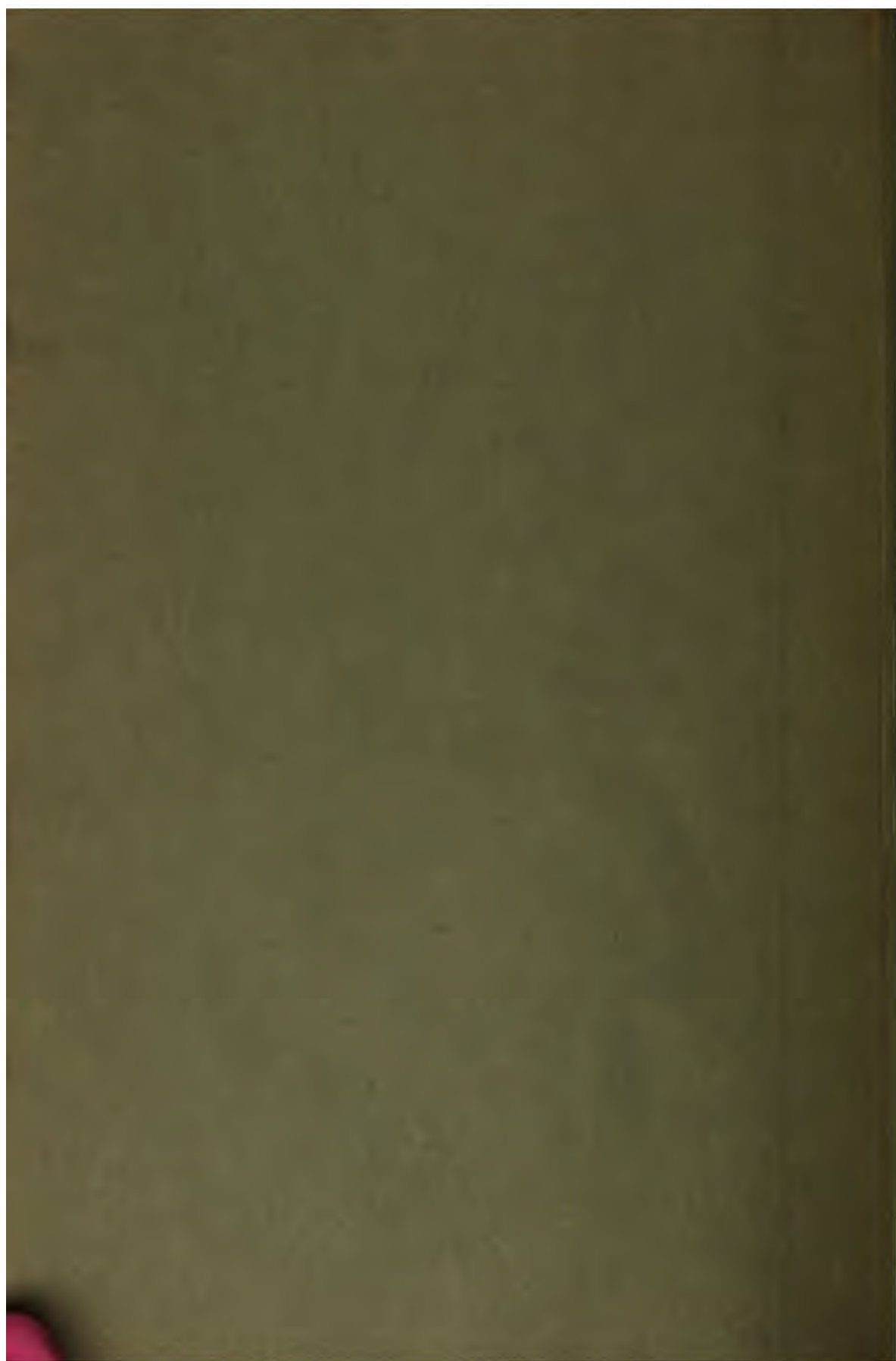
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